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CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION.

Ross Hom. S.

BY

SALADIN

Author of "God and His Book," "The Bottomless Pit," "Lays of Romance and Chivalry," etc.

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CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION.

THE Church that is better at argument must give way to the Church that is better at blows. Theology is not a dialectician with words—she debates with the *shillelagh*. The young plant of Christianity never grew till it was fenced round with a hedge of swords. "Proof," say you? If such a statement be not true on the very face of it, history can produce proof in abundance. The Saxon axes hewed Christianity out of Britain; it had to be restored by the monks of St Augustine, and they managed to re-establish it, only because they managed to get the axes on its side. The Society of Jesus fairly planted Christian colonies in Japan; but, in spite of the sword of the spirit and the whole armour of righteousness, Christianity became utterly exterminated before a torrent of spears. If Christian cannon had only spoken louder, the sound of the "glad tidings of great joy" (save the mark!) might to-day have been ringing from the cathedral of Yeddo. If, instead of the sword of the spirit, there had been 20,000 British bayonets, the breezes of Niphon might at this hour have been musical with the psalms of David. Persecution paralysed the *heresy* of the Albigenses, and ran its stilleto through the heart of Protestantism in Spain. In France, Catholicism waded to power through the carnage of the St Bartholomew massacre, and set her heel on the neck of the Huguenots by the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. In England the issue between Rome and the Reformation hung in the balance till the diplomatic ability of Elizabeth and her ministers flung the preponderance of bills and bows, pikes and spears, into the scale against the interests of her of the Seven Hills.

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State religion is State persecution. It is privilege to one band of sectaries and disability to all others. "The opinions," says Lecky, * "of 99 persons out of every 100 are formed mainly by education, and a Government can decide in whose hands the national education is to be placed, what subjects it is to comprise, and what principles it is to convey. The opinions of the great majority of those who emancipate themselves from the prejudices of their education are the results, in a great measure, of reading and discussion, and a Government can prohibit all books, and can expel all teachers, that are adverse to the doctrines it holds. Indeed, the simple fact of annexing certain penalties to the profession of particular opinions, and rewards to the profession of opposite opinions, while it will, undoubtedly, make many hypocrites, will also make many converts. For any one who attentively observes the process that is pursued in the formation of opinions must be aware that, even when a train of argument has preceded their adoption, they are usually much less the result of pure reasoning than of the action of innumerable distorting influences which are continually deflecting our judgments. Among these one of the most powerful is self-interest." Thus the mere act of taking one sect of Christians under State protection is injustice and persecution to all other sects whatever.

But, in the past, Christian persecution has seldom stopped at the infliction of mere civil and social disabilities. When persecution is spoken of to Christian apologists, under the influence of modern humanitarianism, they reply that persecutions have, indeed, been carried on by professing Christians; but that, in so far as they indulged in them, they belied Christian principles and permitted their vindicative passions as men to overmaster the essentially tolerant and humane principles of their faith. This is false. Nay, the very opposite is the truth. The modern and cultured Christian is tolerant only in proportion as he is not a Christian, and in ratio as he has progressed in the path of enlightenment and benevolence and forsaken that of Paul and the Fathers. The

* "The Rise and Influence of Rationalism in Europe," vol. ii. p. 3.

belief that you have the finality and fixity of truth from authority that cannot err is an inevitable source of intolerance towards those who cannot accept the truth which is, to you, a complete entelechy. Doubt in your own mind, as regards the tenets you hold, is the well-spring of toleration towards those whose tenets are different. Absolute faith inevitably means persecution; doubt is the *fons et origo* of toleration. "The only foundation for toleration," said Charles James Fox,* "is a degree of scepticism, and without it there can be none. For, if a man believes in the saving of souls, he must soon think about the means, and if, by cutting off one generation, he can save many future ones from hell-fire, it is his duty to do it." Not only, then, does Christianity, being a divine revelation, "the very word of very God," contain in it essentially the principle of persecution; but the Bible exemplifies the practice as well as supplies the theory. For his most horrible cruelties to the heretic the Churchman could always quote, "*Idolatra educebatur ad portas civitatis, et lapidibus obruebatur.*" †

Christianity itself whined and groaned under persecution on the scaffold or among the wild beasts of the arena; but, in conformity with its inherent principles, the moment it got the power to do as it had been done to it inaugurated persecution upon a scale tremendous and terrible, and to which the world had previously been a stranger. The early Christians were real; the modern Christians are a sham. If the Christians were real, they would before this have burnt to ashes the hand that pens these lines. Christianity would have done it unhesitatingly in the days before it degenerated into a conventional bogus that nobody can well attack, because nobody knows exactly where it stands. But in the old and true days, when it stood by the Scriptures and the Fathers, it acted in a way which, however deplorable, we must respect the actors for sincerity and consistency. To try to stamp out heresy it hesitated not to slaughter thousands and tens of thousands—nay, to exterminate a nation, or even to depopulate the world. "Give me the earth purged from heretics, and I

* Rogers' "Recollections," p. 49. † Deuteronomy xvii.

will give you a heaven!" was the vehement cry of Nestorius to the Emperor. After the mission of Dominic the persecution of heretics in certain districts amounted to absolute extermination; and in 1568 a sentence of the Inquisition doomed *the entire population of the Netherlands to death as heretics.* "Three millions of people, men, women and children were sentenced to the scaffold in three lines."* So terribly in earnest was the Christian Church, preferring that the earth should be rendered a depopulated and howling wilderness rather than be peopled by heretics.

No sooner had the perfidious murderer, Constantine, declared in favour of Christianity than, armed with the civil power, it sprang from the dust in which it had been writhing and shrieking under the rod, and, wrenching that rod from the hands of the persecutors, it brought it down with remorseless cruelty upon the backs of all and sundry who failed to recognise deity incarnate in the wandering preacher of Galilee. First, with terrible hate, the Christian blade was stabbed into the Jewish heart, and persecution, such as they had never before experienced, fell upon the seed of Abraham, although they were of the same race as the man-god of this new faith in whose name they were called upon to suffer. The race-blood from which their Christ had sprung the Christians shed like water. Next, the Christian fury was directed against the Pagans, who, when in power, had been so tolerant to them, and who had never punished them for their monstrous creed, but only for their flagitious crimes. And, next, the Christian fury fell upon such Christians as differed from the majority on some nugatory and hair-breadth point of doctrine; and neither Jew nor Pagan was hounded to dungeon and death with more remorseless zeal than was Christian by brother Christian. "There are," exclaimed the heathen, "no wild beasts so ferocious as Christians who differ concerning their faith." A Jew who married a Christian incurred the penalty of death; a Christian who might select a Jewess for his mistress was liable to be burned alive; and a certain Christian

* Motley's "Rise of the Dutch Republic," vol. ii. p. 155.

Queen* passed a statute going into the details as to how Christians were to be entertained and accommodated in Christian brothels, but enacting that, if a Jew dared to enter the chamber of the holy harlots, he was to be flogged.

The Jew's own Scriptures furnished texts which the new sect read as his death warrant. Deity himself was cited as the first persecutor in that he expelled Adam from Eden for a breach of the divine law, and cursed his descendants. Elijah was referred to as having slain the prophets of Baal, and also Hezekiah, Josiah, and Nebuchadnezzar as noted persecutors of heretics under divine approval. Moreover, the master-spirit of the early Church, St Augustine, gave to persecution the impetus of his genius, learning and zeal. He cursed religious liberty in the memorable words: "*Quid est enim pejor, mors animæ quam libertas erroris.*"† With him heresy was the most destestable of all crimes, immeasurably worse than ordinary murder, being the murder of the soul. Toleration was an absolute crime. The closest and the tenderest relations of life were to be utterly trampled on and disregarded in the interests of suppressing heresy. "If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers; namely, of the gods of the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shalt thine eye pity him; neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him; but thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people; and thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die; because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the Lord thy God."‡ "He that believeth and is baptised

* Jeanne I., in 1347. *Vide* Sabatier, "Hist. de la Législation sur le Femme Publique," p. 103.

† Epist. clxvi. ‡ Deut. xiii. 6-10.

shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned."* "If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, nor bid him God speed."† "If any man preach any other Gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."§ "I would they were even cut off that trouble you."† The whole Christian fabric was rested upon "Believe and be baptised." Any hypocrite and liar could, when he found it suited his interests, say he believed, and generally there was an end of it. But, with baptism, it was different; there required to be the "outward and visible sign:" every human being that did not submit to being damped by a priest went inevitably to perdition. Practically, the Christian watchword was "Be damped or be damned."

The Church took care that children who were likely to die before their mothers gave them birth should be, prenatally, baptised with a syringe. Christendom was baptism mad. Only the waters of baptism could render you so damp as to be unsuited for hell. The keenest intellects of the Middle Ages engaged in a subtle and acrimonious controversy in regard to a Jew who got converted to Christianity in an arid desert. The Jew was dying, no water could be found, and, instead of the cooling fluid, his brow was sprinkled with hot desert sand, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.‖ The controversy hinged on the question as to whether baptism with sand was, or was not, effective in securing salvation. The Council of Trent settled the matter, and declared that baptism must be by water, and water only; and so it was discovered that, after all the bother, the converted Jew was damned. Every unbaptised infant was consigned to the same region as the sand-baptised Jew. Every child came into the world bearing the guilt of "Adam's first sin," and under the sentence of eternal torment; and learned works advocating this view have been written as late as in the memory of men still living, and by no less able theologians than Dr Jonathan

* Mark xvi. 16. † 2 John i. 10.
‡ Gal. i. 9. § Gal. v. 12.
‖ *Vide* Thiers' "Traité de Superstitions."

Edwards—so firmly based is Christian persecution upon the bed rock of infallible dogma.

Under Christian persecutions thousands of Jews took the precaution to get baptised with water to save their lives. Christianity thus made tens of thousands of hypocrites and liars, and she makes millions of them even at this hour—men and women who do not believe her dogmas, but who are too indolent to investigate and too cowardly to avow in vindication of conscience as against selfish interest. The converted Jews had more moral verve. Whenever there was a lull in the storm of persecution they returned to Judaism. No fewer than 17,000 converts that had been made by one man returned, as soon as they dared avow it, to the faith of Israel. This one man was St Vincent, a friar so pure that it is recorded of him that he always undressed in the dark lest his modesty might be shocked by seeing himself naked. The Christians have had numerous purists of this order: they had, in more recent times, the holy ones who inveighed against Linnæus as indecent because his system of botany taught the doctrine of the sexes of plants.

The Crusades alone are estimated to have cost the lives of two million Christians, who dashed their religious fury, almost as impotently as the wave dashes its foam on the rock, on the warriors of the turban and crescent. And even to this day the detested Mohammedan has his mosque on the site of the Holy Sepulchre. But the fury of Christian against Infidel was surpassed by the ferocious zeal with which Christian persecuted Christian, often for differences all but imperceptible, except to the faith-opened eyes of religious lunatics. As we have seen, a keen and rancorous dispute raged for years as to whether it was lawful to baptise with sand, instead of water; and to the learned and devout such problems were ever presenting themselves as the double procession of the Holy Ghost, the exact nature of the transfiguration light upon Mount Tabor, and the existence in Christ of two coincident, but perfectly independent, wills. Want of soundness on such insane subtleties was sufficient to have the unsound one burnt to a cinder.

Indeed, to a common-sense observer, who can divest

himself of the distorted and diseased spirit which animated the centuries when Christianity was yet strong, it would seem that the faith had entered into a solemn league with the powers of Evil to fill the world with horror and misery. When accused by the Inquisition you were not permitted to confront your accuser, nor even to know his name. You might be as orthodox as it was possible to be; but, if any one entertained a grudge against you, he could have you tortured to death by simply giving in your name to the nearest agent of the Holy Office. Then it was all over with you. The procedure was thus:—"The Inquisitor tried to mystify the accused by captious questions. He asked the presumed delinquent whether the new-born infant came from man or God. If the reply was, 'From man,' 'Then,' said the Inquisitor, 'you are a heretic; for only heretics deny the creation of man by God.' And if the accused happened to reply, 'From God,' he was equally convicted of heresy, as making God the paramour of a woman. They asked, too, whether the soul began with the embryo, or after it; whether all souls were made at one and the same moment, and where; whether the host consecrated by the priest was the whole deity, or only part of him. If he answered, 'The whole deity,' the examiner exclaimed: 'Suppose, then, that four priests consecrate the host at one time in the same church, how can the whole deity be contained in each consecration?' and, if the trembling respondent admitted, in his confusion, that such was the necessary inference, the Inquisitor triumphantly convicted him of asserting the existence of four gods at once. A Franciscan monk ventured to declare openly (1319) in Toulouse that Peter and Paul themselves would have been unable to prove their orthodoxy before the Inquisition, and was condemned to imprisonment for life for uttering this unpalatable truth." *

Among the first schismatics to suffer martyrdom were the Arians and the Donatists. Their churches were destroyed, their leaders banished, and their writings committed to the flames. Then there was a lull. The

* Mackay's "Rise and Progress of Christianity," pp. 301, 302.

tremendous power of the hierarchy had welded and pressed together the shattered fragments of the dismembered Roman Empire. The influence of the then Church and the condition of the then Western Europe were commensurate, and on the quiet of moral apathy and intellectual atrophy rested the pillars of the Age of Faith. But this age was, naturally, only a transition, not a permanency. The innate restlessness of human speculation and the Revival of Learning chafed against the iron ring with which the Vatican bounded the world. Under the blow of the crozier Europe lay stunned, but not slain. She arose, and, looking around in the dim sunrise which had succeeded a rayless night, she beheld Rome holding the crown and keys, and posing as the sole and only oracle to which the problems of existence and destiny could be carried and the vexed questions of secular life referred. The pretensions of the oracle were doubted. Scepticism arose spontaneously and blossomed into heresy—in the eyes of the Church the most execrable of all crimes.

Though heaven and earth should fall to pieces, this heresy must be put down. Rome arose in her majesty, strong as the north wind, cold and pitiless as the descending avalanche. Her attitude had been, and must be, unquestioned, unchallenged AUTHORITY; and that authority must be vindicated. The issues of man's everlasting destiny were in her hands, and she would rise equal to the charge confided to her. She had the whole truth, and outside her pale was inevitable perdition. The fate of souls was in her keeping, and those souls should be kept, at whatever cost to the body. Better that earth should shriek for a thousand years under the fellest tortures human ingenuity could devise than that a single soul should pass an eternity of fiery agony in hell. Her mind was made up, her Holy Scriptures explicit, and her duty clear. She set afoot her Inquisition, deepened her dungeons, sharpened her heading axe, got ready her torch and fagot and her machines of torture, and set about her duty as expressly indicated in her doctrines. Christianity was then strong and honest. She could see her duty and carry it forward for God's sake, even through consequences the

most terrible—through the annihilation of all that is essentially human and the substitution of all that is positively fiendish.

"Men, like fish, were devourers of each other; there was no fear of God or man; iniquity trod on the heels of iniquity; adultery, sacrilege, and homicide abounded; the strong oppressed the weak."* This was the state of matters that obtained from 1208, when Pope Innocent III. established the Inquisition. For weary century after century the red spectre of persecution presided over the thud of the heading-axes and built up the fires that were fed with human flesh. On, from 1208, this spectre stalked down the ages till it was lost amid the blood-mists of the French Revolution. The ancient red spectre died in the grasp of the modern one; the rack of Innocent gave way to the guillotine of Marat. But the Inquisition did not depart till it had piled its holocausts mountain high. According to Llorente, who had free access to the Inquisitorial archives, in Spain alone the Inquisition burnt 31,000 persons to death, and condemned 290,000 to punishments in many cases only nominally less extreme than the death penalty. These numbers do not include the victims who perished under branches of the Inquisition established in Mexico, Lima, Carthagena, the West Indies, Sicily, Sardinia, and Malta. In the Netherlands alone 50,000 suffered death for heresy in a single reign—that of Charles V.

Vivicremation—burning alive—was the stale and ordinary manner in which the Christian Tweedledum disposed of the equally Christian, but more unfortunate, Tweedledee. But the vivicremation had, in the interests of Jesus, to be conducted on a scale so extensive that the ordinary stake-and-fagot arrangement was found to be inadequate. Besides, the quantity of timber it took to roast him was too expensive to be consumed on such a worthless thing as a heretic. It accordingly came into fashion to make strong enclosures, like cattle-pens, into which the heretics were packed along with some cart-loads of straw and brushwood. Then the pen was closed and surrounded with troops, and the straw and

* Hallam's "Middle Ages," ii. 223.

brushwood set fire to. And there, amid flame and smoke, perished scores at a time, their cries of agony falling on the impervious ears of their brother Christians, and the stench of their burning flesh ascending as a sweet-smelling savour to the nostrils of Jehovah Elohim, in whose accursed interests man had so terribly turned his hand against his brother man. Then followed the wholesale and unconsecrated burial. Scores still alive, but blistered with burning straw and half-suffocated with smoke, had the cold earth of the grave-pit laid upon their scorched flesh, and were, in their tomb, left to die at their leisure. The Archbishop of Rheims and seventeen other prelates looked upon the conflagration in such a pen as I have referred to, when no fewer than 184 heretics were in it, at one and the same time, suffering death by fire.

In the face of the appalling numbers of those who died for real or suspected heresy in regard to often incomprehensibly subtle points in that most unscientific of all sciences, theology, dare you, O Christian apologist, contend that a faith that, in one way or other, has been guilty of the violent death of millions of the human race has brought "glad tidings of great joy"? Thousands, tens of thousands, were tortured for days with the fellest torture that human ingenuity could devise, and then borne out with dislocated joints, broken bones, and mangled limbs to, over *a slow fire*, writhe out the bitter dregs of life that yet remained. Hear their groans, their shrieks, their yells of anguish arise from the torture-chamber and the fagot's burning agony. These cries of mortal pain yet peal down the corridors of the ages, and proclaim your "peace and goodwill" a mockery and a lie. And to the fiery sufferings of dissolution was added all the poignancy of supernatural terrors. The Spanish heretic was burnt in a yellow blouse, upon which the flames of hell were painted to indicate that the few days or hours of torment on earth were to be succeeded by torment everlasting in the infernal world. The heretic's goods were confiscated, his children left to perish, and his wife, under social and ecclesiastical ban, to sink to prostitution and beggary; for the heretic's crime was so terrible that it blighted all that had been connected with

him like a canker and a curse. Thus was spread the suffering over an immeasurably wider area than the mere tens of thousands who perished at the stake. For every sufferer had some friend, some father, some mother, some child, and the bane of his martyrdom alighted upon all, and the fearful conviction that the one who had been so dear to them had gone only through a fiery prelude on earth to the everlasting burnings of hell. Thus the Christian faith blighted and embittered the lives of millions whom its malevolence only indirectly reached. Unsatiated with the burning of the living, the Romish Church tried for heresy the very dead man in his grave, and the coffin and the pall and corruption could not save him from the dread tribunal, more especially if his heirs were in possession of property which, finding him guilty, would confiscate to the Church. Death and suffering to millions and outrage to the very dead in the tomb are associated with the faith of the Galilean and his Gospel of sarcastic mockery: "*On earth peace and goodwill to men.*"

If any apologist for Christianity may venture to affirm that Catholicism had the monopoly for persecution, I am prepared to maintain that Protestantism, in proportion to its power, in the work of persecution, was no whit behind the Church of Rome.

"He that believeth not," etc., was a statement so explicit and on such inexpugnable authority that the extirpation of those who should tend to shake the belief of the orthodox became the foremost and most imperative of duties. Believe this statement, and the better man you are, the more merciless persecutor you will be. Buckle has corroborated the testimony of Llorente, that the most terrible of the persecutors, Torquemada included, were, in themselves, humane and kind-hearted men; but they believed in the doctrines of their Scriptures and Church, and consequently, when heresy was under judgment, deemed it their duty to God and man to steel their heart against every human emotion, and to become merciless as the she-wolf from whose dugs her young had been torn away. The crime lay not with the inquisitors and torturers; it lay with those who forged writings which they alleged to be of divine origin—it lay with the Church that, in

maintenance of her own dominancy, perpetuated and enforced the fiendish corollary of the written fraud.

Consequently, as I have said, Papist and Protestant alike persecuted in proportion to their respective influences. For the stake and rack were on both sides, at the disposal of strong and earnest men—souls capable of the direst renunciation and sacrifice, and prepared, at the call of what they felt certain was duty, to make earth an Aceldama of gore and groans, that heaven might be an Elysium of gold and glory. In England here we have been fed full of horrors on the recital of the persecutions by the Papists; and the ordinary Protestant in the street holds persecution to be a trait of the hated Romish Church, and is unaware that *his* Church ever persecuted at all. The prolonged and gallant struggle of the Scottish Covenanters was not against Papists but against their fellow Protestants. It was a Protestant hammer that drove the wedges down upon the splintered bones of Hugh MacKail; it was Protestant murder that, in front of his own doorstep, scattered the brains of John Brown of Priesthill. They were Protestant hands that tore the body of Alexander Peden from the grave. Those fierce blades at Bothwell are in Protestant hands, and, from point to hilt, they are red with Protestant blood. The mad and miserable hundreds in Greyfriars' churchyard are Protestants, and it is a hedge of Protestant muskets that keeps them there. The *Crown* that goes down into the churned fury of the deep, gored to ruin on the rock horns of the Orkneys, is filled with Protestants, shipped off by other Protestants to be sold in the Indies as slaves. Protestant voices sing that death-psalm till the sea closes and roars over the psalm and the singer.

The John Calvin was no Papist who, in order to prolong his agony, caused Michael Servetus to be slowly roasted to death. In Holland a man who had already been scorched, racked, and partly flayed is trailed across the floor of the dungeon out into the light, that other horrors may be perpetrated for the purpose of inducing him to take a certain view of certain doctrinal points—one more attempt to bring him properly to him who said, "He that believeth not shall be damned." The man, back downwards, was firmly secured to the floor. Then,

on his naked abdomen, was placed an inverted metal vessel containing under it a number of rats. On the bottom uppermost of this basin live coals were heaped till the rats underneath, to escape being roasted alive, tore their way through the man's flesh into the cavity of his body to find refuge among his intestines. The basin was removed, and fiery cinders were thrust into the holes in the flesh through which the rats had torn their way.*

* Adapted from "The Bottomless Pit" to which the reader is referred for further details of persecution by Protestants.

THOUGHTS

ON

The Proposition of the Pope in Rome,

TO THE

PROTESTANT CHRISTIANS IN ENGLAND,

To Pray to

THE VIRGIN MARY THE MOTHER OF GOD,

AND ON

HIS OFFER OF 300 DAYS INDULGENCE.

Respectfully dedicated to Pope Leo XIII.

BY

CHRISTY NOSIN MORALSON.

LONDON:
W. STEWART & CO., 41 FARRINGDON STREET, E.C.

THOUGHTS

ON

THE PROPOSITION OF THE POPE

TO THE

Protestant Christians in England.

THESE lines are written in sincerity to honour God, and I do much esteem the mental and physical struggles of mankind to get nearer and nearer to the Deity, and see him—*somewhere*. Such struggles commenced since the creation, and the dark ages witnessed many and much of them according to the knowledge of the times; even at the present period there are over thirty millions of Christians who are desirous of knowing God, and seeing him, according to their light, *some day*.

But the Christians, with the advantage of education, ought to be ready at all times to assign rational reasons for their faith in God. It ought to be founded by "fairness in listening to evidence, and judging accordingly, without being led away by prejudice and inclina-

tion." Seek for the arguments of faith to honour God, and receive nothing as truth, even if it dribbled from the lips of a prophet or an apostle—because both might be incompetent. "Know ye that the prophet was foolish, the spiritual man was mad?" (Hosea x. 7). The Jews of Berea were more worthy than those of Thessalonica, for they searched the Scriptures before their conversion (Act xvii. 10-13).

The gratuitous proposition of the Pope and the unseemly offer of indulgence necessarily provoke the following questions:

1. Was the Virgin Mary the mother of God?
2. Was Jesus the son of God?
3. Was Jesus God?
4. Was the history of Jesus by the Evangelists a myth?
5. Is the Pope the divine authority of God on earth?
6. Was it proper for the Pope to tender to the Protestants of England an indulgence?
7. Ought Englishmen to be grateful for the Pope's Christianity in England subsequent to the departure of St. Augustine back to Rome?

My arguments to meet these questions are based upon the Scripture and the reasons of many intelligent, prudent, and learned men, vouchsafed to illuminate the world from ignorance to wisdom for the glory of

God, and for the mental and material comfort and happiness of mankind.

First.—Was the Virgin Mary the mother of God?

No woman is virgin nor maid in her purity after conception or birth of her still-born or live child.

It is not a momentous matter in religion to address Mary, the mother of Jesus, as "Virgin Mary." The appellation in the earlier Christian times was necessary to distinguish that lady from the nervous, the amorous, and the seven times devilised Mary who frequented the social circle of Jesus and his mother, and gave him no less than seven opportunities for displaying miracles on her person.

The Virgin Mary never acknowledged to man or woman that she was the mother of God. Her spouse, the thoughtful and kind Joseph, it is said, dreamed that his Mary, before the completion of the marriage, was conceived by the "Holy Ghost." That name was never heard prior to the practice of the mission of Jesus, so how did he know that the nightmare was "Holy Ghost"?

No human being could dream of a thing that he has never *seen*, *read*, nor *heard* of. "Nations have their gods according to their opinion." Joseph and Mary, and their people, Zacharias, Elizabeth, and others, were Hebrews and Jewish Unitarians; so they never had a Holy Ghost for an extra god.

The story of the conception is not unlike the

phraseology and sentiments of the monks and priests since the trial and crucifixion of Jesus under the Roman law, which, even to the present times, is respected by civilised nations and applied in their disputes and decisions. Therefore Joseph's dream is not a reliable evidence that God was the son of the Virgin Mary.

Secondly.—Was Jesus the son of God?

In filiation the mother's evidence is of much importance. No mother would conceal the name, the character (even the behaviour, if necessary) of her child's father were there nothing to be ashamed of in the matter. The Virgin Mary would have realised the honour had she been divinely impregnated, and would have freely narrated how it came to pass that she found herself to be the mother of God. But she kept her own counsel and secret!

The Virgin Mary is the principal human medium of a tangible God, disrespectfully called by the angel Gabriel the "holy thing" (St. Luke i. 35). The young lady was not frightened at the appearance of the angel in the closet, with wings on the shoulders, unlike any man; but his words and salutations "troubled" her, and she innocently asked him: "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" But the impossible process of conception was described by the angel from heaven in the inspired language of the reputed Saints, Matthew and Luke, upon earth for the edifica-

tion of mortals that God's ways are unlike the ways of men. However, the obtuse in understanding them ought to be pardoned for denying that Jesus was the son of God.

Thirdly.—Was Jesus God?

Joseph and the Virgin Mary were indifferent in the care of their son Jesus. Could the doubt about the filiation be the reason for it? They were religious, and kept the Passover at Jerusalem, where, unknown to them, their son of twelve, with "the grace of God upon him," remained to converse with the "doctors," perhaps on miscellaneous subjects of law, medicine, and divinity. Be that as it may, after a day's journey his parents thought of him. Upon finding him, his weary mother exclaimed: "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." Never mind the answer of the heartless and unruly boy of twelve, who, when a man over thirty, advocated domestic desertion, encouraged violation of natural sentiments, and pleaded in favour of self-mutilation and personal degradation, and supported the practice by offering rewards of a hundredfold. In addition to the same, there was the great advantage of the "Glory of eternal life in the world to come" (*vide* Matt. xix. 12, Mar. ix. 43-47, Mar. ix. 29 and 30). Jesus found no fault in the rich and unreasonable employers, but advised good and industrious servants *not* to expect any reward, *not* to brace their

energy with rational hopes of finding grace and meeting the favour of their masters, but to feel satisfied in saying, "We have done our duty." Never mind if it was extra work.

Jesus, it is said, did many things and spoke much; but they were generally of an evasive nature, contrary to good sense, and not acceptable in practice. He was hasty and abusive, well up in the use of strong epithets—such as hypocrites, vipers, fools, etc. He was impatient in hunger, and when disappointed he destroyed a fig-tree that did not belong to him; besides, he killed the pigs of other people for the glory of God. If Jesus was God, then he extolled his own acts. But God would not commit such unseemly acts nor extol them himself.

Jesus is admired for saying, "Foxes have holes, birds of the air have nests;" but he has left the thoughtful to find out how he, "the son of man," had no place to rest. He had the power of working miracles, he knew the means to feed and lodge without expense, and to procure the free use of ships, boats, and donkeys whenever necessary.

Jesus puzzled the simple woman of Samaria by speaking of the "Living water," the "Gift of God," and other spiritual matters, but, as she could not comprehend, he reverted to mundane topics, and informed her that she had five husbands, that the mate she has now is not a "great shake," but only a *locum tenens;*

she should fetch him, and come back for the "Living water." The poor unfortunate called Jesus a prophet —to her he was nothing but a prophet—for her religion and country recognised prophets, whereas for tune-tellers and character-readers were stoned, burnt, and otherwise killed. (Our London magistrates are more lenient ; they either fine or imprison.)

In spite of the story of Joseph, the report of the shepherds, the leap of the unborn John Baptist in the womb of the aged Elizabeth, the Lady Virgin Mary was cruel to her husband and son for twelve years with regard to the matter of the paternity of Jesus. Would she have acted thus if Jesus was God?

Jesus, when at large, never said that he was God, or the son of God. He always spoke of God as his superior without an equal, and that he himself was the "son of man." If Jesus was the "Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," he would have known it, and the consciousness would have precluded the necessity of his asking his disciples, "Whom do men say that I, the son of man, am?"

The passages in St. John x. 30, xiv. 9—"I and my father are one," "He that hath seen me hath seen the father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the father"—do mean that they are both one in counsel, purpose, and design. Any person may use similar phraseology in conversation when alluding to an absent party. Take another instance: when praying for

his disciples, he asked God, his superior, "that they may be one, as thou, father, art in me and I in thee; they also may be one in us." Would all of them, if the prayer were granted, mean to be metamorphosed into God? No; it meant that they should be like unto God and Jesus in thoughts, words, and works. It is through the unhappy misconstruction of the words of Jesus that the Church propagated the doctrine of the "Holy Trinity." Adore God only.

The erratic and credulous Peter was the sole human being when Jesus was at large to avow that Jesus was the Christ. But Jesus warned him and the other disciples to tell it to no man. Perhaps the fulness of time had not then come—it was proper to postpone it for thirty years, till his followers called themselves Christians, or for a few centuries after, to be revealed by inspired or designing writers. The postponement of the report was a mistake, and it practically enhanced the doubt that Jesus was God.

Fourthly.—Was the history of Jesus by the Evangelists a myth?

Oh! do not mock the anxious seeker of the truth with the assumed history of Jesus. Nearly nineteen centuries have passed away in doubts owing to the ominous enjoinment of Jesus: "Tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ" (see Matt. xvi. 20). Even when he resorted to miracles for the glory of something or somebody, he wanted the matter to be unknown (*vide*

Matt. viii. 4). He inherited the queer quality of his mother to keep secret when publicity was prudence.

His birth, it is said, was ushered with the hallelujahs of angels, whom the shepherds saw; and the wise men of the East beheld the Star of Bethlehem, that at once convinced them that a King of the Jews was born publicly; yet it is said that King Herod and his officers were unable to find the baby boy. The wise men of the East promised to inform him of the whereabouts, that he also might worship the baby. But there was a dream that induced the wise men to elude King Herod. Dreams are essential in religion, and they compromise many difficulties—for was it not a dream that prevented Joseph from divorcing the Virgin Mary? (see Matt. i. 24). It was his dream that stopped the collapse of the Christian doctrine or faith.

The Hebrew prophecies about Jesus are not accepted by the Hebrews, who ought to know best, for Jesus belonged to that nation. Moreover, he, at his trial for blasphemy and high treason, did not cite them as evidence that he was the son of God, or God.

His sermons and teachings indicated that he was introducing a new doctrine; in similar manner did the instructions of the other reformers, and even the founders, like Moses and Mahomet, indicate. Were they God?

If he did work miracles, so did Moses and the

apostles, the prophets, besides others, who were sinners, and did not know Jesus. Were they God? According to Jesus, there could be no miracle without faith. In some locality he worked no miracle because the inhabitants thereof had no faith.

In performing miracles, Moses used the rod—jugglers used the wand; but Jesus always demanded faith. Many things could be accomplished through faith—even ruination. Though very many years have elapsed since I was a playful boy, yet I remember the agony of my fond mother on the news of the failure of a mercantile firm, wherein was deposited upon *faith* the source of her subsistence. I still remember her pale face, her uplifted eyes dimmed with tears, her closed hands pressed to her breast, her bended knees on the hard floor. With such a scene impressed on my memory, and the practical training of thirty-three years to balance evidence and untangle the string of argument, it would not be a crime to ask for the rational history of the life of Jesus?

His crucifixion is no proof that he was the son of God, or God. Jesus was punished, and he died like a man. If Jesus was God, then God had had himself punished and crucified; if so, it was suicide. If Jesus was the son of God in verity, then the crucifixion was the violation of paternal love, and a clumsy example of it.

The resurrection of Jesus, if true, does not prove

that he was God. The Scripture shows that the revival from the grave or death was *not confined to Jesus alone.*

Fifth.—Is the Pope the divine authority of God on earth?

The works of God are patent and visible in his inimitable acts of the Creation, but his words are never known. Prophets and poets inform us that God possesses the attributes to speak, laugh, repent, drink, fight, besides other human accomplishments; but the Church, with the Pope, assumed the right to interpret the meaning of God's language, whether spoken or written. The Pope of the times of incipient Christianity accepted the words in the Epistle of St. Matt. xvi. 18 and 19, and interpreted that "Peter" and "rock" meant a pun, and were the same thing, upon which Jesus will build his Church; and as there are many mansions in heaven, their keys will be in the charge of Peter; and whatsoever Peter shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever he shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Now, Jesus never built a church, nor did Peter play the game of loose and fast. The interpretation was rendered when the Pope was liable to err or to be deceived; but about 1870 the Pope of the day declared that the Pope in council was infallible. Yet it has not been proved nor pointed out which was the Church that Jesus built, and what was the thing that Peter made

fast upon earth. Further, it must be remembered that Jesus was *not* God, nor the son of God; so he could not have given Peter the keys of heaven. The words of the Epistle, if true, were expressed in a rapturous delight of Jesus on finding the *first man* who acknowledged him to be "*Christ, the son of the Living God.*" Is this not an exercised ecclesiastical mode of expression in vogue by the Christians since the days of foreign monks and priests? How came the Galilean fisher of olden times to learn and use it? The Pope's pretension to be the head of the Church of God is nonsense. The Church of God is everywhere; his temple is the universe; and his altar and sacrifice are the heart and mind of man.

Sixth.—Was it proper for the Pope to tender to the Protestants of England an indulgence?

Evidently it was not proper. The value of the fond kindness of the Pope is an unknown article to the heretics and schismatics of England; and the Pope has not explained whether there is any virtue in his conditionally-offered indulgence of three hundred days to those who prayed to the Virgin Mary. How would the Pope know that they did pray? How can it be ascertained that the Deity shall permit the Virgin Mary and the saints to intercede for the heretics and schismatics? Was not the blood of the final victim, if true, sufficient to appease the Deity, who, the prophets and the spiritual men say, is merciful? The

Virgin Mary is represented in Roman Catholic pictures as weeping and praying for her son upon the cross, but neither the infallible Pope nor the spiritual men could know what were the words of her prayer, and whether it was granted. If so, then, is it not idle and conceit to pray to God through presumed intercessors?

Lastly.—Ought Englishmen to be grateful for the Pope's Christianity in England subsequent to the departure of St. Augustine back to Rome?

No! Pope Gregory was informed by St. Augustine that he found on his arrival Christianity "flourishing in Cornwall and Cumberland, in Wales and Ireland." He and his fellow missionaries converted a portion of England, then inhabited by the heathen Saxons and Angles. But the Christianity of his time, whether at Rome or England, was unlike the Christianity of the Pope after the papacy of Gregory. It did not then persecute; transubstantiation was not sanctioned till 1215; the "Blessed Virgin" and "Immaculate Conception" were not recognised; the story of purgatory was not published by authority at Florence till 1438; and the last act of self-sanctification of the Pope was in 1870, when he proclaimed that he was "infallible when in council." Did the Holy Ghost inform him of it in a dream?

Religion is a system of faith and worship, and it is considered by all nations to be a duty to God. The

old Christian Church of England existed prior to the advent of the Romish faith in England, and it did its duty both before and after the Reformation. May it continue its hallowed task of teaching "how to carry on a correct life on earth" without compulsion and persecution.

Should the serious reader consider my arguments to be indelicate, then they are so unavoidably, on account of the examination of a peculiar doctrine veiled in impurity and absurdity during 1,895 years, and now roused by Pope Leo XIII.

Did Jesus Christ of the Four Gospels ever Live?

BY ERNEST PACK.

WHETHER Jesus Christ of the four Gospels ever existed is the question we propose briefly to examine, and space being limited we have none to waste by way of preamble. We seek to save the reader's time and trust we shall not be considered abrupt because we are direct. We even expect a little credit for our consideration. First, then, by Jesus Christ of the four Gospels we mean not some fanatical man—Christ or crafty imposter who may have claimed for himself divine honours, but the said-to-be immaculately born Son of the Virgin Mary, and miracle-working God-man—this, and no other. It is necessary to be very particular upon this point for there have been many Saviours, both before His reputed time and since. Saviours to right of us saviours to left of us, saviours all round us, as one might say. And although the same claims are made for them all, Christians would have us believe that their Jesus only is genuine and that the others are spurious. Well, in our mustard-and-cress days we were wont to hold the same opinion, and it will be our duty to give a few reasons why we renounced it.

We found (1) we had been bamboozled into believing by faith, instead of by facts. (2) That contemporary history had nothing to say about this mythical personage. (3) The Christians had done their best to rectify this misfortune by forging the missing testimony. (4)

That no evidence was forthcoming that any such persons as the twelve Apostles ever lived. (5) That no trace of our four Gospels could be found prior to about 150 A.D., and (6) we thought that had the miracles ever taken place during the active life of Jesus (31 to 33 A.D.) there would have existed ample records of them in the historical accounts of that period, and we looked upon this solemn silence on the part of every contemporary writer, as conclusive testimony in confutation of the Christian legend. We reflected also that one little grain of evidence traceable to the first half of the first century would have been of greater value than whole granaries of assertions made in the latter half of the second century. Then there was presented to us the fact recorded by Gibbon, that in Rome, Christianity was rejected "as an idle and extravagant opinion by every man of a liberal education and understanding." (Decline and Fall, chap. xv.) We observed likewise that "both parties" (Christian and Pagan), "seemed to acknowledge the truth of those miracles which were claimed by their adversaries; and while they were contented with ascribing them to the arts of magic and to the power of demons they mutually concurred in restoring and establishing the reign of superstition." (Ibid, chap. xvi.) And the same great scholar sagely remarks in a footnote that, "it is seriously to be lamented that the Christian Fathers by acknowledging the supernatural, or as they deem it, the infernal part of Paganism, destroy with their own hands the great advantage which we might otherwise derive from the liberal concessions of our adversaries." (Ibid.) Further, we noted in the pages of this learned writer that those among the Romans "who condescended to mention the Christians, considered them only as obstinate and perverse enthusiasts who exacted an implicit submission to their mysterious doctrines without being able to produce a single argument that could engage the attention of men of sense and learning." (Chap. xv.) These truths we read, and many others, and they burst upon us like a revelation, while the belief of our youth was shaken mightily, yea, even to its very foundations —and after that, the earthquake! Down fell the whole

edifice of our faith, and there we stood looking on with mixed feelings of annoyance, disappointment, and regret, for we received in our youth a very pious training and were ill-prepared for such disquieting discoveries. But the facts were too strong, and forced upon us the conclusion that we had been grossly deceived. There can be no doubt that all Christian teaching has been anticipated by other masters long prior to the time that Christ is said to have lived, as a study of comparative religion amply proves, and religious parallels everywhere abound. Here, for instance, is a list of crucified Saviours who were all good enough to die for us before Jesus thought of doing so. Chrishna of India, 1200 B.C.; Sakia, of Hindustan, 600 B.C.; Thammuz, of Syria, 1100 B.C.; Wittoba, the Telingonese, 522 B.C.; Iao, of Nepaul, 622 B.C.; Hesus, of Great Britain, 834 B.C.; Quexalcote, of Mexico, 587 B.C.; Quirinus, of Rome, 506 B.C.; Prometheus, of Greece, 547 B.C.; Thulis, of Egypt, 1700 B.C.; Indra, of Thibet, 725 B.C.; Alcestos, of Greece, 600 B.C.; Atys, of Phrygia, 1170 B.C.; Crite, of Chaldea, 1200 B.C.; Bali, of Orissa, 725 B.C.; Mithra, of Persia, 600 B.C.; Salvahna, of Bermuda; Osiris, of Egypt; Horus, of Egypt; Odin, of Scandinavia; Zoroaster, of Persia; Baal, of Phœnecia; Bali, of Afghaniston; Xamolxis, of Thrace; Zoar, of the Bonzes; Adad, of Assyria; Deva Tat, of Siam; Alaides, of Thebes; Mikado, of the Sintoos; Beddin, of Japan; Thor, of the Gauls; Cadmus, of Greece; Hil and Feta, of the Mandaites; Gentaut, of Mexico, etc., etc.

We should think that after knowing of all these human sacrifices, Christians will feel more important than ever. They may find the various histories of these obliging gentlemen in a work by one, Kersey Graves, entitled *Sixteen Crucified Saviours*, Also they may consult *The Hindu, Pantheon, Mexican Antiquities*, Higgins' *Anacalepsis, and The Progress of Religious Ideas*, all strongly recommended by the clergy. The present following of the principal among these Saviours is, for Chrishna 400,000,000 (for Christ 200,000,000); for Mahomet 150,000,000; for Confucius

120,000,000, and for Mithra 50,000,000. So that there still remains much missionary work to be done.

History repeats itself, especially religious history. Take, for example, the accounts of Chrishna and Christ which furnishes a striking illustration. It is said of Chrishna that his birth was foretold; that he was an incarnate god; that his mother was a virgin; that he had an adopted father who was a carpenter; that there was rejoicing on earth and in heaven at his birth; that his mother's name was Maia; that he was born on Dec. 25th; was visited by wise men and shepherds who were led by a star; was warned by an angel of danger, that all children were ordered to be destroyed in order to include him; that his parents fled to Mathura; that he had a forerunner; that he was wise in his childhood; was lost and searched for by his parents; had other brothers; retired to solitude; fasted; preached a noteworthy sermon; was entitled Saviour and Redeemer; existed prior to birth; and on earth and in heaven at the same time; was both human and divine; worked miracles; read thoughts; ejected devils; had apostles; reformed the existing religion; was poor; was conspired against; denounced riches; was meek; unmarried and chaste; merciful; associated with sinners and was rebuked for it; befriended a widow; met a woman at a well; submitted to insults and injuries; was a philanthropist; had a last supper; was crucified between two thieves; darkness supervened; he descended to hell; was resurrected, and after three days seen by many people! And all this, 1200 B.C. ! ! !

With regard to prophecy we have the coming to earth foretold of others besides Chrishna and Christ, as, for example, Chang-Ti, Osiris, Cadmus, Quirinus, Quexalcote, and Mahomet, and Messianic prophecies are to be found in the *Vedas*, the Chinese Sacred Books, and in those of Egypt, Greece, Rome, Mexico, Arabia, and Persia. There are also many other "odious" comparisons. Osiris is spoken of as having bruised the serpent's head after it had bitten his heel, Hercules is represented with his heel on a serpent's head, Chrishna is pictured and sculptured in the same way, and Persia

has the same old legend. Miraculous conceptions are recorded of Plato (who was said to be a son ofApollo); of Zoroaster; of Mars and Vulcan; of Quexalcote; of Suchiquetqual; of Yu; of Appolonius; of Buddha; of Mahamaya; of Chrishna; of Yasuva; and—incidentally, of Jesus!

Of virgin mothers we have Yasoda, mother of Chrishna; Maia, of Sakla; Celestine, of Zulis; Chimalman, of Quexalcote; Semele, of Bacchus; Prudence, of Hercules; Alcmene, of Alcides; Shing-mon, of Yu; Mayence, of Hesus; and—Mary, of Jesus. who is all behind again. Angels, shepherds, and Magi visited Confucius, Chrishna, Sakia, Mithra, Pythagoras, Zoroaster, and Jesus! Again, December 25th is the birthday given for Bacchus, Adonis, Chrishna, Changti, Chris (of Chaldea), Mithra, Sakia, and—the inevitable Jesus. Of infants threatened by hostile rulers we have Chrishna, Osiris, Zoroaster, Alcides, Yu, Rama, Indra, Bacchus, Romulus,Salvahana, and our dear friend Jesus! Of those who descended into hell and were resurrected after three days may be named Quexalcote, Chrishna, Quirinus, Prometheus, Osiris, Atys, Mithra, Chris, and follow-my-leader Jesus! We trace the Trinity in Brahmanism, Zoroastrianism and the religions of Chaldea, China, Mexico, and Greece! And then the ceremony of the Eucharist was observed by the Essenes, Persians, Pythagoreans, and Gnostics, who used as elements bread and water. It was also taught by the Brahmans and Mexicans, which unpleasant little coincidence so greatly annoyed St. Justin that he remarked: "And this very solemnity an evil spirit introduced into the mysteries of Mithra." Such is the Christian explanation, but there be those who will declare that *all these little fairy tales have a common origin.* Well might St. Augustine remark that "This in our day is the Christian Religion, not as having been unknown in former times, but as recently having received that name," and Eusebius tells us that "The religion of Jesus Christ is neither new nor strange."

We respectfully submit that there exists not a particle of evidence to prove that Jesus Christ of the four Gos-

pels ever lived. The nearest approach to anything of the kind is the Tacitus passage in which Christ is mentioned as having been put to death. But be it known unto you, my brethren, *the celebrated passage was never seen by mortal man until the Fifteenth Century.* The Rev. Robert Taylor informs us (Diegesis) that "the first publication of any part of the annals of Tacitus was by Johanne de Spire, at Venice, in the year 1468—his imprint being made from a single manuscript in his own power and possession only, and purporting to have been written in the eighth century. From this manuscript, which none but the most learned would know of, none but the most curious would investigate, and none but the most interested would transcribe, or would be allowed to transcribe, and that too, in an age and country when and where to have suggested but a doubt against the authenticity of any document which the authorities had once chosen to adopt as evidence of Christianity would have subjected the conscientious scept.c to the faggot; from this, all other manuscripts and printed copies of the works of Tacitus are derived. Taylor considers this passage to be one of the numerous forgeries of which Christian hands have been guilty, for example, the passage in Josephus where Jesus is referred to, admitted on all hands to be a forgery and which as such has been given up by every scholar of note the church possesses. It was also rejected by Ittigius, Blondell, Le Clero, Vandale, Bishop Warburton, and Tanaquil Faber—likewise by the great Dr. Lardner. It was first mentioned by Eusebius who probably forged it himself. Gibbon says of it, " The passage concerning Jesus Christ which was inserted into the text of Josephus between the time of Origen and that of Eusebius may furnish an example of no vulgar forgery." And here we may ask, if there existed undeniable evidence that Christ ever lived, where was the need and what was the object of such forgeries? It is pretty clear that there was no evidence, and that the Christians thought it about time that they manufactured a sample or two. " Daille on the *Use of the Fathers,* remarks : " This opinion has always been in the world that to settle a

certain and assured estimation upon that which is good and true it is necessary to remove out of the way whatsoever may be an hindrance to it. Neither ought we to wonder that even those of honest, innocent, primitive times made use of these deceits, seeing for a good end they made no scruple to forge whole books." (B. 1, c.3). And all the testimony against Christianity was destroyed. Porphry wrote no less than thirty volumes criticising it, and these by Christian orders were all burnt. Comes the question—Why? Why, brethren, why? Because those books would doubtless have shed too strong a light on the subject, and as Bishop Burnet (not Burnit) said: "Too much light is hurtful to weak eyes." So, so, Bishop, so, so! But the Christians perpetrated a worse infamy than burning these books. They attributed to Porphry that which he never did write,and then proceeded to answer "the very weak arguments" which they themselves had invented for the purpose of showing the reasoning against Christianity to be insignificant. Therefore, as Taylor says, "They attributed their own vile trash to him." Thus they forged all the testimony in favour of Christianity, and burnt all the evidence against it. And when they became powerful enough they not only burnt the books but their authors also. They read their blessed Scriptures by the light of the bonfires they made of their opponents' books.

But we must draw our remarks to a close. We have not gone into this interesting subject as exhaustively as we should have liked, and as it deserves, but with the end in view of cramming as much material as possible into the very limited space at our disposal—for verily, brethren, printers' bills are a mighty burden, and we are not a Rockefeller or a Morgan, neither have we that leisure at our command which is enjoyed by the clergy whose occupation employs their talents only one day in seven, whilst we are compelled to spend the other six days uncongenially getting our talents together. But if in the foregoing pages we have succeeded in exposing to view the fraud and deceit with which Christian history abounds, and in assisting to dispel the notion that such a mythical personage as the Christ of

the four Gospels ever existed, we shall have achieved our object. We have furnished a magazine of information upon the subject which no priest or parson is ever likely to disclose (always allowing him to be acquainted with it) for though the clergy talk much of Revelation with a capital R, these be the kind of revelations which they like not. Brethren, farewell.

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IN ACTIVE PREPARATION—No. 2.

From the Gallows to Glory.

THE FLAGELLANTS

AND

THE COVENANTERS

(*New Edition*).

BY

SALADIN.

Author of "God and His Book," etc.

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THE FLAGELLANTS.

From the era of its half-mythical Galilean downwards, Christianity has laid incontestable claims to be considered the Religion of Misery. A radical doctrine of the faith is that this world is only a Babelmandeb, or Gate of Tears to the "glory that shall yet be revealed." The teachings recorded of Christ have all the jaundiced acerbity of the Essenes. The son of Mary was an ascetic, or nothing. According to him, the end of the world was close at hand. Its concerns and aims were despicable, and the best that could be done was to regard its pleasures as pernicious seductions and lay up "treasures in heaven," as it would avail a man nothing should he "gain the whole world and lose his own soul."

Strictly compatible with the teachings of Christ were the doctrines of Cardinal Damiani, when he wrote a panegyric upon the efficacy of self-inflicted suffering, and those of the celebrated Dominic, when he introduced penitential hymns, to be chanted to a tune to which the self-inflicted lash kept time. Hair shirts, protracted periods of fasting, and the like, had long been in vogue as means to propitiate an angry heaven ; but Dominic affirmed that twenty recitations of the Psalms, accompanied by self-inflicted scourging, was equal to a hundred years of ordinary penitence.

Dominic flourished towards the middle of the eleventh century ; but it was not till about two centuries later (1260) that the seed of asceticism he had sown sprang up to be a great and popular tree of self-torture. It was in an age of gloom and suffering and wickedness that, at Pergugia, in Italy, a monk named Regnier, with wild and bitter eloquence, preached Flagellation as the antidote that would restore an afflicted people to the

favour of an angry God. Like Peter the Hermit in the first Crusade, like Luther at the Reformation, or Bernhardt of the Millenarian insanity, this Regnier had rightly interpreted the spirit of the times. He put in his sickle, and the corn was already ripe for the harvest. The wars of Guelph and Ghibelline, famine, pestilence, rapine, murder, and misery had, after a thousand years of Christianity, made Italy and the most of Europe feel that life was, indeed, not worth living, but only a horrid and mysterious burden, which was taken up involuntarily, and which left those who bore it such cravens that they had not the courage to lay it down.

And so another violent epidemic of *Lose your Reason to Save your Soul* fell upon Christendom like a rinderpest. The memory and inspiration of the Man of Sorrows was again to lay the load of a great sorrow upon the shoulders of the world. Once more, as, under the preaching of Bernhardt and Peter the Hermit, rowdy and rascal, swashbuckler and sword-player, blackguard and blackleg, worked themselves into a frenzy concerning one Jesus, whose name has always been a spell-word with miscreants from the time of the Christian cutthroats mentioned by Tacitus down to Booth's latest prize, the "blood-washed soul" of 'Arry Juggins the burglar.

Two by two the holy ones of the whip-lash marched through the gaping multitudes on the crowded streets. Their heads were covered with sackcloth; their remaining article of attire was a bandage round the loins, which rendered them a little decent for God's sake. Their backs and breasts were entirely nude. The back bore a huge cross, daubed upon the skin with red paint; and another cross was smeared upon the naked breast. On through the town, and through the wilderness, in long and narrow file, like the march of the ducks from the dub to the dung-hill, marched those nasty saints of God. The hand of each sacred fanatic bore a heavy and horrible whip, the thongs tipped with iron; and, with this whip, every pious madman lashed his own bare back till the thongs were clotted and gory, and long lines of blood running down

from the scapula to the pelvis defaced the red cross which had been painted on the skin.

To what shall we liken the men of that generation? To a crazy dog, refusing its food and chewing off its own hind legs to please its master. But the analogy is imperfect, and the man flogging his own back to please his Jesus is more irrational than the dog chewing off his own hind legs to please his master; for the dog is positively sure he has a master; but the ablest Christian that has ever written has not been able to establish that his Jesus really ever existed. The only record of him is in four so-called "Gospels," written by nobody knows who, nobody knows where, and nobody knows when, and the statements of which are contradicted by each other and are utterly unsupported by history. A pretty source, indeed, from which to derive a Jesus in whose honour you can flog your back! But backs always will be flogged, and noses ever will be held close to the grindstone, till he with the back and he with the nose takes the trouble to cultivate his brain, and dares to confront, eagle-eyed, the authorities that would make him a chattel and a poor mad cats-paw in the hands of priest and tyrant.

Jehovah has ever liked singing and dancing and capers to his glory and honour. David, the "man according to God's own heart," danced naked before deity and certain young girls; and another worthy sang to God's glory with acceptance because Jael had hammered a nail into her guest's head while he slept. So the Flagellants, besides tickling their own backs with whips, deemed it would be well to tickle Jehovah's ears with music. Accordingly they sang while they flogged. If you think flogging your back is conducive to making you rival the efforts of Sims Reeves, just try the experiment. Flog your back while you sing, and you will find that many a quaver flies off into a scream, and that many a crotchet is dead-born. But the Lord had just to content himself with such music as was obtainable under the circumstances. Certain fragments of the hymns which the Flagellants sang have been preserved. Here are brief specimens:—

"Through love of man the Saviour came,
Through love of man he died;
He suffered want, reproach, and shame,
Was scourged and crucified.
Oh, think, then, on thy Saviour's pain,
And lash the sinner, lash again!" *

The following are a few lines from the metrical rendering into English of "The Ancient Song of the Flagellants":—

"Tears from our sorrowing eyes we weep,
Therefore so firm our faith we keep
With all our hearts, with all our senses:
Christ bore his cross for our offences.
Ply well the scourge, for Jesu's sake,
And God, through Christ, your sin will take.
For love of God abandon sin—
To mend your vicious lives begin;
So shall we his mercy win." †

Thirty-three days and a-half was the shortest term in which a Flagellant must macerate and lacerate himself; and these thirty-three and a-half days were meant to be mystically symbolical of the thirty-three years and a-half which the third part of God, and yet equal to the whole of God, had lived on earth "saving souls" and making three-legged stools. The devotees fell down on their dirty knees in the dirty streets, and, setting up their naked, putrid, and horrible backs, prayed to Jah and Jesus and Mary to have mercy on their souls, before having taken the trouble to find out whether they had souls or not. Jah and Jesus and Mary had, however, something else to do than attend to kneeling lunatics with voices like cross-cut saws and backs like half-cooked beef-steaks. But the cities, then as now, had plenty of fools, and certain of them rushed out at their doors or leapt from their windows for God's sake to join the ranks of those who lashed their hurdies with thongs and prayed with their knees in the gutter. When all Christendom had managed to lash its back to its own satisfaction, it threw down the whip, got up from its knees, and took to swearing and sinning in the usual way.

But, some fifty years afterwards, Christendom again took it into its head that its back would be

* Preserved by L'Evesque: quoted by Lingard.
† Dr. Hecker.

all the better for a flogging. So, in 1296, the saints, particularly those of Strasburg, Spires, and Frankfort, took unto themselves whips, and began business in earnest. The Jews had good broad backs, which they were impious enough never to whip, and this mightily offended the Christian Flagellants. The Jews did not see their way to whip their own backs, so, in the most obliging manner, the Christians offered to whip them for them. The Jews preferred to look after their commercial enterprises to tearing away with a scourge at their own dorsal rafters ; and, for this deadly sin, they were foully massacred. The wretches who did not scourge their backs had scourged the third of deity and crucified him. Down with them to Tophet! One Jew, goaded to desperation by Christian persecution and outrage, set fire to the Town Hall and the Cathedral of Frankfort, and they were reduced to ashes. Down with the seed of Iscariot and Barabbas! The holy ones flung away their whips, and, seizing sword, hatchet, and knife, devoted some hours of horror to the slaughter of man, woman, and child of the seed of Israel. The God of Jacob looked on ; but, apparently, did not see his way to interfere. In Frankfort, of all the sons and daughters of Salem whose ancestors had sung to the Lord by the streams of Babel, none remained alive, except a small remnant that, bursting through the carnage, had escaped into Bohemia. Christ had "redeemed" these Christians (they were well worth it) by a bloody sacrifice upon Calvary, and, out of compliment—like Catherine Medici in her sanguinous bath—they set him in blood to the chin. Every tree must be judged by its fruit. I hereby defy the history of all the other faiths to produce a tree like the Christian one, which, from the deepest root to the topmost twig, is dyed with human gore.

After the Frankfort tragedy of 1296, Flagellantism did not rear its head conspicuously till the year 1348. To students of history the mention of this date recalls the deepest and widest grave that was ever dug to receive the slag and refuse of morality. The "Black Death" took into her hands the besom of destruction, and swept into the sepulchre twenty-five millions of human beings! Europe fell upon

her knees, and from Dirt appealed to Deity. But the appeal was in vain. In every Christian city there was a plethora of disgusting sewage and unspeakable stench. Cleanliness is, proverbially, next to godliness ; but the citizens of mediæval Europe were so godly that they forgot to be cleanly. Outside Mohammedan Constantinople there was not a bath on the entire European continent, from the Straits of Behring to the Straits of Messina. Pious Ignorance and theological Intolerance sat to the eyes in filth, which it would give my readers the jaundice to describe ; and mankind perished as do clouds of locusts when overtaken by a gale at sea, or as perish at the end of autumn tens of thousands of hives of bees, when imprisoned amid the fumes of burning brimstone.

"God in heaven, Mary and all the Saints, what is the matter now?" gasped Christendom, as, with pale lips and phrenized eye, she, in whole cityfuls, staggered into the grave. Nothing practical, as connected with this wretched "Vale of Tears," suggested itself to the follower of Jesus. He was beyond and above attending to the carnal conditions of this despicable earth, and from the midst of his priests and relics and shrines and miracles his whole hope was in heaven, and his only court of appeal his "Maker and Redeemer." But neither Maker nor Redeemer could be induced to interfere ; and graves were dug till there were none left to dig them, and corpses were borne out of the streets and houses till there were none left to bear them. There were only the voice of prayer, the cry of pain, and the rattle of the death-cart ; and in certain districts even these sounds died away. In the houses the dead were left with the dead. There lay a disused cart and a skeleton horse. Grass and weeds flourished in the streets where a busy traffic had rolled its tides, and there the wind waved ghastly shreds of human apparel, still adhering to more ghastly relics of human beings. There was high carnival for maggot and fly, and dogs and swine tugged and snarled among the entrails of those who had trusted in Jesus and neglected their dust-bins.

The New Testament was looked to as the antidote to the bane ; and, whatever may be its merits,

it is a poor manual of hygiene. Scrubbing is never mentioned, and there is no reference to washing, except to the washing of "souls," whatever they may be, in blood. There is, moreover, allusion to the washing of a certain party's feet with tears, and then drying them with maiden's hair; but this is a sentimental and not an efficacious lavation. It is not on record that Mary or Tabitha, or anyone else, ever washed the shirt or tunica which was worn under the seamless garment of Jesus, and I question if it was ever washed or changed from the day on which he left the carpenter's bench till the day that, with his life, he expiated his sedition and folly. Through all the horrors of the Black Death we hear of no wholesome and honest washing with water; but there certainly was a washing of the streets with blood. It was surmised that this visitation of the wrath of Heaven was instigated by the sinfulness of the Christians in allowing the Jews to live; for it was the Jews who had crucified the Lord; and yet, according to the Christian theory, if the Lord had not been crucified, the world would inevitably have been lost. The Black Death was accompanied with another merciless massacre of the Jews. It was also accompanied by another pitiless flogging of backs. So fanatically wild did this self-inflicted back-flogging become that many held that the rite of Flagellation should, in the Christian Church, supersede the rite of Baptism. Many literally flogged away the flesh off their bones, and yet the plague did not abate; and the sky and the earth were pregnant with supernatural terrors. A pillar of fire hung over the pope's palace at Avignon; a red ball of fire in the heavens blazed over Paris, and Greece and Italy were shaken with an earthquake. And the Christians flogged and prayed, and prayed and flogged, and sang and slew, and slew and sang, and still the plague went on.

Flagellantism was not without its serio-comic aspect. I cannot say whether it copied from the game of Leap-the-Frog, or whether Leap-the-Frog has copied from it. In Leap-the-Frog each boy vaults over his neighbour's bended back, and then bends his own, and so on the process goes till each has vaulted over the back of all. The Flagellants lay

in rows, and one ran along the row scourging furiously as he went with a leathern scourge tipped with iron, and then he lay down ; and so on and so on, till each had flogged the naked backs of all. In lying in the rows to be flogged, however, those who wished to do penance for certain crimes had to observe certain recognized postures indicative of these crimes. If the crime was perjury, till it was his turn to get up and flog, the penitent lay on his side, holding up three fingers ; if it was adultery, he lay flat with his face on the ground ; and so on, different postures of the body were fixed upon to indicate different crimes. The Flagellants, too, were not without their grotesque impostures in the shape of pious forgeries. At one of their assemblies they actually read a letter which had been sent to them direct from heaven, and in which Jesus Christ was good enough to give them his favourable opinion of the efficacy of flagellation. The "Blessed Virgin" had, with maternal affection, given her son some assistance in the composition of this celestial missive.

Unlike the Millenarian mania, the Flagellant craze extended even to England. In 1351 a deputation of 120 continental Flagellants visited London ; but insular stolidity did not see its way to carry its piety to the extent of lacerating its own flesh with scourges. Even on the continent the frenzy began to exhaust itself. The leaders betook themselves to desperate resources to buttress up a falling cause. They set themselves to the task of restoring life to a dead child, and performed the "miracle" so clumsily that the performance hastened their dissolution instead of giving them a new lease of influence. In the hey-day of their fanaticism neither king nor pontiff saw it prudent to interfere with the Flagellants ; but when the tide turned against them, king and pontiff turned against them too. A bitter persecution set in, and Flagellantism, like most other isms, was called upon to furnish its roll of martyrs, and it heroically enough responded to the call. Its dying spasm—and it was a vigorous and terrible one—was in 1414, and some time later it finally expired in the dungeons and amid the fagots of the Holy Inquisition. Mankind, in the mass, continue to be fools ; but, in the last four

centuries, there has been some small advance towards sanity, and it is now somewhat difficult to get anyone to flog his own back for the love of God.

W. S. R.

THE COVENANTERS.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 27th, 1884.

The House met at four o'clock.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Answering Mr. Buchanan, the Marquis of Hartington said he had communicated with Lord Wolseley as to the employment of a greater number of Presbyterian chaplains with the Scottish regiments under his charge, adding that one at present at Alexandria would be available, if his services were required.

ALAS, that the world has not yet dispensed with the services of Presbyterian Beetles of god and gun! I myself ran such a narrow escape of being a Scotch Beetle that this project of employing the *Scarabæus Scotorum* in Egypt brings up to my memory sundry of the bloodthirsty insects' previous ravages scrolled over history's panoramic canvas, and that in pigments of blackness and fire.

There, with high cheek-bones and scowling brows, with black gowns and Geneva bands, file past the *dour* and grim fanatics who barred the path of Charles I., and of Laud, Juxon, and Wren. There go they who, for twenty-eight years, through steel and blood and heather, set their backs against the wall of Fate, and practically swore to lead Scotland to Hell, rather than to Rome.

History has a pretty feasible hint that the shower of clasp-Bibles that, on July 23rd, 1637, rained so murderously round the head of Dean Hanna, in St. Giles's Church, were flung by Scottish ministers, dressed in female gowns and mutches, and that their pulpit-trained voices initiated the popular yell of "Anti-Christ! Anti-Christ! A Pope! A Pope! A Belly-god! Stone him!" It was the fanatical and hard-headed Presbyterian Beetles who, by their wild biblically-phrased warnings, roused the Scottish

peers to a vivid apprehension that, if Charles and Laud succeeded, the estates which had been confiscated from the Church at the Reformation would be wrenched from the nobles and restored to Rome. This was a potent argument; for, whatever might be the territorial lord's desire for a place in the kingdom of heaven, he would fight and sing psalms for twenty years rather than lose a single acre of his lands in the kingdom of Scotland. And thus there was almost instantly arrayed against the Government a black phalanx of ninety Beetles, walled round by John, Earl of Rothes; John, Earl of Cassilis; Alexander, Earl of Eglington; James, Earl of Home; William, Earl of Lothian; John, Earl of Wemyss; and John, Earl of Loudon; Lord Lindesay, Lord Yester, Lord Balmerino, Lord Cranston, and large numbers of the gentry and lesser nobility. These, of course, led with them the psalm-singing yokels of their estates, primed up by the Beetles to a perfect phrenzy of religious fanaticism, which could not fail to be exceedingly profitable to their lords and masters. There is no patriotism in denying that Scotland's desperate struggle in the seventeenth century was carried out by the immoral instrumentality of Beetle and noble-primed bumbkins, howling from Jeremiah and canting from Ezekiel, grimly frantic with suffering and fanaticism, who, singing psalms, mutilated the slain, and dashed their texts and swords at the same time through the bodies of the dragoons of the Government. Scotland did all this drunk with divinity, and I should respect her quite as much if she had done it all drunk with whisky. And yet I should like to see the land in the whole world that can afford to scoff at her. Man, up to this time, has been a small and nasty animal at the best, and what are magniloquently called his noblest motives will not bear anything like rigid analysis. You are kinder to mankind when you expect too little of them, than when you expect too much. And it will puzzle your ingenuity to expect less than you will get.

The passage in Genesis, anent God's making all things very good, would have stood better on its legs if it had read, "God made all things very good

save man, and him he made mad." It is teleology alone that makes man madder than his "earth-born companions and fellow-mortals." Well might Burns apostrophise the mouse :—

> "Still thou art blest, compared wi' me :
> The Present only toucheth thee ;
> But, ah ! I backward cast my e'e
> On prospects drear ;
> And, forward though I canna see,
> I guess and fear,"

It is all very well for writers of the school of Dr. Lewins to abjure teleology absolutely. It rises superior to abjuration. The speculatively religious instinct is strong in normal man, and I, for one, rejoice rather than lament that it is so. It is not the religious instinct that has stultified and cursed the race, but the diversion of that instinct into baleful channels by interested sacerdotal and civil chicane. Man has too little religion, rather than too much ; but he has certainly too much theology, rather than too little.

But, back to the Black-Beetles of the Presbyterian corner of the vineyard of the Lord. So well did the interested leaven of religious sedition work, that in June, 1638, the High Commissioner swaggered up to Holyrood escorted by 20,000 men, most of them mounted. There were present, moreover, 700 Beetles, the most sour and grim kind that ever banged a bible for the love of God. Many of them had buff coats under their Geneva cloaks, and, according to Burnet, many wore in their belts swords, pistols, and daggers, that, for the love of heaven, they might redden the earth with blood. Madly Beetle-bitten, the peasantry flew to arms ; every Beetle-box in the country breathed of fire and slaughter ; the crackle of musketry was in every sermon, the roar of cannon in every prayer ; the sword-blade was sharpened on the pulpit, and the kirk became a recruiting-ground for the battlefield. "We have now cast down the walls of Jericho ; let him who rebuildeth them beware of the curse of Hiel and Bethelite," was the refrain of a Tyrtæan sermon by Henderson, of Leuchars. Beetles Mushet, Row, Cant, Dickson, and a mighty host of murderous piety, took up the cry. It was thundered from hundreds of pulpits. The heather was, indeed,

on fire. The Beetle struck the Bible with his fist in the emphasis of bloodthirsty rhetoric, and his voice found a terrible echo in the ring of the armourer's anvil, as the hammer clashed and clanged upon the red-hot iron that was being fashioned into bit and stirrup, helmet and sword-blade.

The Lords of the Covenant prepared for war. Wheresoever the carcase of prey is, there shall the eagles of militarism be gathered together. Heretofore Scotland had proved too stale and pacific to be a fitting arena for the restless energies of her gentlemen of the sword and swashbuckling fire-eaters, and they had accordingly poured in thousands from the banks of the Forth, the Dee, and the Clyde to the banks of the Elbe, the Oder, and the Danube, to follow Gustavus Adolphus for gold and glory, and write their names imperishably in their blood in the annals of the Thirty Years' War, in which the stubborn valour of the Scottish Legion filled all Europe with their renown. The Beetles had now wrung the coin out of the pockets of their frugal countrymen at home, and their fighting countrymen abroad rushed back to offer their steel blades and their blood for the merks of the peasant and the burgher. The world had no better soldiers than the Scoto-Swedish officers of Gustavus, among the most distinguished of whom were Sir Alexander Leslie, Sir Alexander Hamilton, Sir James Livingstone, Monroe, Baillie, and other heroes of Prague and Fleura, and numerous battlefields in Polish Prussia, Brandenberg, Westphalia, and Silesia. The Beetle, the ancestor of him now wanted in Egypt, had done it with a vengeance. Every *fourth* man in Scotland was to consider himself a soldier. The sword of the Lord and of Gideon! The land was as busy as a beehive declaiming sermons, whining prayers, drawling psalms, and getting ready arms and munitions—body armour for the cavalry, buff-coats and morions for pikemen, and muskets with rests for the musketeers. A cannon foundry was, moreover, established at the Potter Row, Edinburgh, under the direction of Sir Alexander Hamilton, formerly master of the cannon-foundries of Gustavus Adolphus at Urbowe, in Sweden. And all Beetledom was up on end, and raving to Jehovah to hurl

down the curse of Meroz upon those who failed to gird up their loins and go forth to help the Lord against the mighty.

The old legend-book of Judah was clasped to the very heart of Scotland. Its bloodiest and most terrible texts were interwoven with the common parlance of mundane affairs, and preached from with a wild and volcanic vehemence. "And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine: and all flesh shall know that I, the Lord, am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty one of Jacob." "The Lord hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea." "Cursed be he who keepeth back his sword from blood." "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel: Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out, from gate to gate, throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour." These were the sort of bases of Beetle-spun harangues that scared the pee-wheet and the plover of the hills and moors. "Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass. And Saul gathered the people together, and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand men of Judah. And the Lord sent thee on a journey, and said: Go and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed," was the fearful text from which a certain Beetle of Hell preached, and incited the Covenanters to, after the Battle of Philiphaugh, enclose the defeated musketeers of Montrose in the courtyard of Newark Castle, and pour in volley after volley of shot upon the defenceless and unresisting mass, till not a man remained standing; and the gunpowder smoke cleared away and left the court covered with blood and brains like the floor of a slaughter-house, and the air rent with the shrieks of those to whom Death had not yet come in mercy to end their agony. After this holy massacre, 1,000 corpses were interred in a spot which to this day bears the shuddering name of

The Slain Man's Lea. And so much did the Presbyterian Beetles insist upon the curses that would overtake those who spared the Amalekites, the enemies of God, and so terribly did they emphasise "*man and woman, infant and suckling,*" that the swords of the Covenant ripped open the bodies of the women with child, and transfixed the unborn babe with the blade reeking with the blood of its mangled mother,* that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

So much for the antecedents of the Presbyterian Beetles Mr. Buchanan inquires about so kindly, and in regard to whom the Marquis of Hartington replies that there is a spare one to be had at Alexandria. Even now, it would seem, Scottish soldiers do not feel they can slaughter properly for the Lord unless they are under the beetlefications of an Ephraim MacBriar or a Gabriel Kettledrummle!

How long, O Lord, how long, will it be accounted glorious to drill a bayonet through a diaphragm, and valorous to lodge a leaden pellet in the medulla oblongata? No religion whatever can be true whose God is the God of Battles, and whose priests officiate in the sanctification of slaughter. O that there were a righteous heaven, and that man's objective Paradise was correlative with man's subjective desire! Then would I call to this heaven to witness that the torn banners and emblazoned rags of war are hung up as trophies in the Christian churches and cathedrals—the relics and memorials of wounds and misery and hate and death in the temples of "the Prince of Peace"! I have sat in a certain cathedral and listened to the Gospel of goodwill to all mankind, although, at the entrance, I had to pass dusty, torn, and ghastly relics of some of the bloodiest engagements in India and the Peninsula. I yearn for the religion that will account State murder and private murder alike unhallowed, and which will find no room in its fanes for bannered rags in memorial of burning towns, slaughtered men, shrieking widows, and breadless orphans, more than for the gory knives which were wielded by the miscreants and murderers whose infamy is perpetuated in the Chamber of Horrors at Madame Tussaud's.

W. S. R.

* Gordon of Ruthven.

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ZOOTHEISM: TALES OF DIVINE ANIMALS.

———:o:———

Whenever animals have had unnatural characteristics attributed to them, they have always attained prominence in religion, and, in many instances, the lower the beast the grosser were its godly pretensions.

Varro estimated that more than 30,000 different gods have existed, and that most of them originated from the animal kind. He also adds, that they were responsible for abominable crimes such as are found only in the vilest of men. And although these gods were declared to be eternal and immortal, every one of them has its history of birth, death, and burial.

The earliest and most popular animal-deity appears to have been the Ox, and of this specie, according to Pliny and Herodotus, there were two first prize ones among the bovine herd. These were Apis and Mnevis, and they commanded the largest share of patronage. Apis had its temple in Memphis, facing due East, while Mnevis chewed its divine cud at Heliopolis, the City of the Sun, which the Jews called ON, where Joseph's father-in-law, Potipherah, was its high priest (Gen. 41.)

The ox-god Apis was a black beast. It was miraculously conceived by the lightning entering a beautiful cow. Even its tongue and tail were different from those of other oxen. There was a white square patch upon the forehead, and its back was marked with the figure of an eagle. During the seven days feast devoted to its birthday celebration, the high priest plunged a silver cup into the Nile, and it was believed that as long as this cup remained in the river, the crocodiles would not bite; but as soon as the cup was withdrawn and replaced in the temple, those crocodiles became rapacious again.

Both Apis and Mnevis were ridiculously alike in prophesying. This they did either by nodding their heads, wagging their tails, or using dancing children as mediums.

When a god died (as all gods must) the priests, being magicians, had no difficulty in producing another god,

peculiar marks and all, after the same manner as Jacob did with Laban's sheep.

Respecting the details of animal worship and its ceremonials, these must be left with Diodore of Sicily, for they were so abominable and utterly abhorred by other nations who were provoked to war against the Egyptian zootheists. In one of these engagements, Cambyses, King of Persia, mortally wounded the helpless god Apis with a spear, and actually gave its carcase to the dogs to be devoured by them. But as the dogs were sacred animals also, such a sacrament as one god eating another, was too much even for the Egyptians, who struck off the dogs from the Catalogue of Gods.

Darius Ochus, another Persian king, sorely troubled the Egyptians for calling him an ass. Darius replied, "the ass would eat their ox." This he did, and then caused an ass to be installed in the Temple in place of Apis as a token of achievement. For this sacrilege, an Egyptian eunuch named Bagoas assassinated Darius, whose corpse the sacred cats ate.

Although one specie of animals deified by one sect would be abominated by others, yet whole nations were unanimous respecting the worship of an ox-god. And such was the extraordinary variety of animals claimed for zootheism, that we find wolves worshipped in Lycopolis. Venus had a pigeon and Minerva the Dragon. Peacocks were claimed by Juno, while Esculapus loved serpents, about which several ridiculous tales are told. Others showed their preference for the Ibis and Ichneumon. Some worshipped the grasshopper-god, Locustarius; and a ratkiller-god is mentioned by Eustathius, the famous commentator of Homer upon the Iliad, etc. Even the old Romans, as Clemens Alexandrinus says, had a god as expeller of flies in the Temple, in the Ox Market, where neither dogs nor flies were ever known to enter. Tacitus exhibits a monstrosity having three heads, viz., that of a lion in the middle, a dog's on the right, and a wolf's head to the left. This trinity was known as God Serapis, which means the Prince of my Father.

Vigilance being a characteristic peculiar to dogs,

caused these animals to be deified under the name of Anubis. The crocodile having no tongue, likewise became a symbol of divinity. Clemens of Alexandria describes a religious procession in which two golden dogs were carried with much solemnity; and in the city of Arsinoe there was a divine crocodile with the appellation of Suchus. Both hemispheres reverenced tortoises, and the sentiment of veneration for sacred elephants is accounted for by ancient religious traditions. Many images of these pachydermita may still be seen in the grotto of Elephanta.

Apion, Tacitus, and Plutarch charge the Jews with worshipping the ass, whose golden image was preserved in the Temple of Jerusalem. They declare that the primitive Jews also worshipped swine, and for this reason its flesh was not eaten by them. Josephus, of course, says this was not so, but he remarks, had the world embraced zootheism, there would have been only animals left. Their absurdities knew no bounds, for these sacred animals were fed and housed most sumptuously, and some were regularly bathed and even perfumed. Such an expenditure the priests could well afford, as their gains from so lucrative a business amounted to thousands of talents annually.

Juvenal, in his 15th Satire, regarding zootheistic absurdities says: "How distracting is monster worship. This sect adores the Crocodile, that dreads the Ibis glutted with Serpents. The golden image of a sacred Monkey shines where the ancient Thebes with its hundred gates lies ruined. Whole towns venerate Sea Fishes, and the Fish of the river; another worships dogs. It is even impious to violate a leek and an onion, or to bruise it by a bite. O Holy nations, for whom these deities grow in their gardens. It is profane to kill a young goat, but it is allowed to feed upon human flesh."

Among this vast zoological collection, the ox-gods were always the most numerous, being lavishly adorned with jewels and garlands, in the same manner as the gods were adored by the Israelites (Ex. 32).

Referring to the religious divisions and their adopted

animals, Osiris, King of Egypt, decreed that each sect should have a banner, and upon it a figure of its tribal animal god.

Moreover, according to the Pentateuch, when the Lord divided the Twelve Tribes into Four Bodies. He ordered a banner also for each of them. Reuben's depicted the figure of a Man, Judah's a Lion, Dan's an Eagle, and Ephraim's had an Ox.

Likewise, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John have their emblems of a man, lion, eagle, and an ox. And behold, Christ is the lion of the tribe of Judah (Rev. v. 5). And to this day, Zootheism is perpetuated. Its idols may be seen over the facade of St. Paul's Cathedral, where full-sized images of a man, a lion, an eagle, and an ox, together with St. Peter and his famous cock-bird, are placed and carefully protected by lightning conductors.

Christians who pride themselves upon THEIR sacraments would do well to consider ancient sacred animalism and its connections with the Lamb of God, and a paraclete dove. Let them compare the hieroglyphics (holy writings) with those of the Bible, and the one will be found to be equally zootheistical as the other. Why, the cattle worshippers even had this inscription: "I am that was, that am, and shall be, and that am everything," which is an exact interpretation of the word "Jehovah," and is the same definition appropriated by the Bible God.

Now turn to 2 Kings i. 2, where Beelzebub is mentioned in connection with the death of Ahaziah, King of Israel, who sent messengers to inquire of the God of Ekron, whether Ahaziah's disease would be fatal or not. This is the same Beelzebub referred to in the New Testament, under the name of the Prince of Devils, and by whose virtue the Jews said that Jesus Christ cast out devils. The words in the Second Book of Kings are rendered by the Septuagint as "inquire of Baal-Fly," and by Flavius Josephus as the "God Fly"; images of which were made up of a human body and a head representing a fly. The Jews derided this fly-god by changing the final "b" into the letter "l," which then signified the God of Dung, for Zebub means fly, and Zebul is dung.

To tell the truth, these alterations were made deliberately, in order to make the repulsive presentable, or the ridiculous to appear more reasonable. For instance, "Bethaven" was originally rendered "House of Iniquity," where Jeroboam set up his calf-gods. But the Christian translators turned Bethaven into Bethel, the "House of God." Another example of this method of exchange was, when an impostor appeared with a pious name, it was turned into one of ridicule. Thus, the word Jesus, signifying Saviour, was altered to Jeshu, which means "nothing."

Whether Beelzebub was dung or flies, or both, the Israelitish King trusted in it, and as Orpheus says, "believed the oracles of the greatest god of all, wrapt in dung."

Here is another notable specimen, the God Dagon (Judges 16). It was the House of Dagon, we are told (1 Sam, v.) that received the ark of God, and Saul's head after battle with the Philistines (1 Chron. x. 10). Dagon was a fish-god, and of all the fishy tales related, that of St. Anthony is the most absurd.

In explanation of 2 Kings, 17, 30, where the men of Cuthah brought their Nergal, etc., zootheistical research declares Nergal to be a cock-god; the Ashima of the men of Hamath was a wild goat; the Avaites called their gods Nibchaz and Tartak, which were a dog and an ass. The Talmud Tract Sanhedrim also tells us at the sacrifices of Sepharoaim, sons and daughters were burnt in honour of Adrammelech and Anamelech, mule and horse gods. "Therefore the Lord sent lions among them" (2 Kings 17, 25). The gods of Seir, mentioned in the history of Amaziah (2 Chron. 14, 25) are really Abraham and Isaac deified as calves, and known by the name of Aretsa (Arza), 1 Kings 9, 16.

Herodotus has handed down a startling story concerning Sennacherib, the most insolent blasphemer of all gods. It appears that the Egyptian King Sethon was in a terrible plight. He accordingly went into the Temple and prostrated himself before his god. Sethon was distressed so much that he went to sleep. His god then appeared saying, "no harm shall befall thee."

Being comforted by this revelation, and refreshed by sleep, the King immediately arose and marched his soldiers to Pelusium, through which place his enemy, Sennacherib, had to pass. At the scheduled time, the Assyrians arrived and bivouacked. During the night, a multitude of terrible rats gnawed all the harness, their bow strings, and shield straps. In the morning, finding themselves disarmed, the troops were seized with terror and hastily retreated with heavy losses. These were the 185,000 men of Sennacherib's Army who, "when they awoke in the morning were all dead corpses (2 Kings xix. 35). And to commemorate this farrago, a statue was set up representing Sennacherib handling a huge rat, and inscribed upon the base were these words: "Let him that looks upon me learn to fear the Gods."

Wiser men were thoroughly ashamed of these godly enormities, and contrived many methods to expose them; but so long as the priests were supported and protected by kings and magistrates the god-fancying business continued to flourish. Socrates was condemned to death for scoffing the pagan gods. He ridiculed their whole menagerie, in order to show that there was no more divinity in it than in a dog. To the zoological priests, Socrates was an atheist, yet he was termed "the wisest of men."

Among other mystical religious emblems, animals' horns signified Strength and Fulness. In this sense, the Bible tells us of the Horn of the Wicked, as well as the Horn of God's People. Horns are frequently referred to in Daniel, and Revelation declares that Kings are horned beasts. It should be remembered, too, that Moses had horns (Ex. 34, 22) and "Joseph's horns were the horns of a wild ox to gore the people to the ends of the earth" (Deut. xxxiii. 17).

Balaam was told that God was as strong as an ox antelope, and in Habakkuk III., we learn that God had horns coming forth from his hand. These horns of God evidently account for what He did to the other sacred animals in Egypt (Num. 33, 4).

The history of Zootheism is not only interesting but instructive. It teaches that the Christian God idea

evolved from the Israelitish God—a golden calf—which originated in pagan animal worship. Gregory of Valence clearly states that the Israelites believed the Ox Apis to be their God, and they made a calf of Him.

It is written (Ex. 32, 14) "These [golden images] be thy Gods O Israel, which brought thee out of the Land of Egypt." And that the Bible thoroughly supports this bovine idea, there is a definite statement that the God of Moses was so jealous that He was ready to destroy all other gods and their worshippers on the spot. "Let me alone," says He to Moses, "that I may consume them" (Ex. 32. 10). And He did too, for 3,000 were destroyed in a single day (Ex. 32, 28); thus the God of Peace and Love prevailed—for a time.

Howbeit, the same calf-gods were still worshipped, many years afterwards, during the reign of Jeroboam, when he made a feast, proclaiming, "Behold thy Gods, O Israel, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt" (1 Kings 12, 28).

All the foregoing Biblical quotations clearly evince that the Israelites, God's chosen people, continued to worship their God, *The Creator of Heaven and Earth*, as a golden calf.

Now, in order to completely solve this animal-god problem, we must go even to the New Testament. Yea, even to St. Paul, who according to Acts 17, 24, said, the God whom we declare unto you is *The Creator of Heaven and Earth.*

But *The Creator of Heaven and Earth* is the God of Israel. Therefore, the God of Israel is equal to St. Paul's God. And St. Paul's God is also the Christian's God. But gods which are equal to one another are the same. Therefore, the Christian God is equal to the God of Israel. But it is has been shown that the Israelitish God was an animal god.

Therefore, the Christian God is an animal god. And this agrees with the words of the Psalmist (96, 5)

"All the Gods of the People are things of Nought."

Q. E. D.

MY VISIT TO
MR SPURGEON'S TABERNACLE.

I LEARNT, on the evening of Thursday, Feb. 25th, 1886, that it was one of Pastor Spurgeon's dipping nights; so I, for the nonce full of holy zeal and fervour, strode off to the house of the Lord. The house of the Lord in Newington is not like the houses that the Lord usually lives in. It has no steeple, towering up impudently and uselessly into heaven. It is a big square clump, which, it would seem, originally thought it would be a prison, but which afterwards changed its mind and tried to become a madhouse. It is of the dumpy, gouty order of architecture, in which Mr Spurgeon himself has been designed and constructed.

And in those days the sons of God went up to present themselves before him, and I, Satan, went up amongst them. I entered by the door to the extreme left, facing the street, and, ascending a flight of stairs, found myself in the first gallery, and in the front seat thereof. There was plenty of room for more saints than had assembled, so I had little difficulty in edging myself up till I had an excellent view of the platform and the sanctified duck-pond in front of it. The platform is a spacious one, with a good deal of sitting room on it and behind it. And on

it and behind it sat some dozens of what I took to be Mr Spurgeon's principal fugle-men and bottlewashers in this Newington corner of the Lord's vineyard.

The only person *standing* upon the platform was a squat, rubicund little man, who was pawing away at the railing and talking platitudes. It was a good many years since I had heard that squat little personage before; but the pleasing and musical, albeit full and resonant, voice, the dictional glibness of gab, and the unaffected but singularly accurate pronunciation told me at once that I had before me the world-renowned Charles Haddon Spurgeon. His subject was *faith*, and the assurance of Christ to his disciples that the reason they could not 'cast out devils' was 'because of their unbelief.'

The preacher had no more attentive hearer than I was. Acquainted as I was with Mr Spurgeon's atavisms of thought, I confess that I was yet absolutely dumb-foundered to hear the crudities and puerilities of the Dark Ages discussed as though the light of the subsequent centuries had never cast a single ray upon them, and as though the babblings round the world's cradle were good enough to be uttered in the arena in which the world now wrestles in the might of its manhood. Spurgeon's devil is simply the devil without a *soupçon* of subjectivity or metaphysical explaining away. He is no Ahriman, or Siva, or Lok, or Evil Principle. He is simply the old, crude, objective devil that can now frighten only children and the handful of adult children who hang on to the coat-tails of Mr Spurgeon, and let the world go round without carrying them with it.

This crude and objective old devil can be 'cast out.' It is one of the evidences of divine goodness that the devil is permitted to get inside us. It gives us the opportunity to 'chuck him out,' and thereby show God how strong we are. The Omniscient, of course, does not know how strong we are till he learns it from marking the

measure of our success or non-success in chucking out devils. But Mr Spurgeon does not see even thus far before his nose. He is, perhaps, the most single-minded man in Europe. With him there is just a light and no cross light, far less the interminable interweaving of cross lights of every prismatic tint and hue that, in suggestion springing from suggestion, and thought vaulting from thought, strains and bewilders and agonises the whole being of men of mental grasp and intellectual subtlety.

Mr Spurgeon believes in demoniacal possession, just as his prototype did in Galilee nearly two thousand years ago. He tries to thrust on Newington the *cultus* of Capernaum, and he, to an appreciable extent, succeeds. For the non-thinker is always the non-thinker; he has always been with us, and ever will be with us. His mental (by courtesy) qualities are negative, and are all stereotyped. What Peter or John would have believed at the beginning of our era, Spurgeon would believe to-day. He referred to the disciples beholding 'Satan as lightning fall from heaven,' just as if that phenomenon were as widely recognised and as validly established as, say, the event of the first Reform Bill. No subtleties, no embellishments, no explanations that explain away; simply the devil was seen as lightning to fall from heaven! Mr Spurgeon takes his time from a clock in Jerusalem, which eighteen centuries ago stopped and has never gone since. His brain has no convolutions. What he wishes to believe he succeeds in believing; for where there is just one thought there can be no counter thought. Persons of this type seem to have been very numerous in primitive and unlettered times. But evolutionary processes have given more momentum to the fly-wheel and more complexity to the machinery of cerebration; and few specimens of the type are found now outside our asylums for imbeciles. When they are found and are deemed sufficiently sane to look after themselves,

and not to be dangerous to their fellows, they form the soil to support the only plant of true and unadulterated Christianity that now remains in the world. I make bold to say that, on the old-fashioned and neglected Jesus and Paul lines, Mr Spurgeon is the most genuine Christian now in Europe.

The divine duck-pond in front of the platform is the peculiar feature of Mr Spurgeon's hell-and-thunder shop. There it yawns like the abyss in the forum into which Curtius leapt; and there are plenty of Curtiuses waiting to leap into it, not to save Rome, or England, or anything stupendous, but simply to save their own microscopic souls. After a few bouts at praying, and other devout tomfoolery, Mr Spurgeon disappears from the rostrum. In passing, I wish to put it on record that Mr Spurgeon prays to his maker in a loud voice, as if his maker were deaf. He assures everybody that his maker is quite near, and yet he continues to bawl at him as if he were a quarter of a mile away. He dogmatically insists that his maker is *inside of him.* Inside of him, in the abdominal cavity, there is certainly room for a good-sized maker; but he might surely select more desirable accommodation. To this said maker, inside of him, to whom Mr Spurgeon bawls—knowing best the acoustics of his own interior—he is familiar, if not, indeed, impertinent. If I were God, I should snub Mr Spurgeon for his irreverent familiarity. He prays for a great deal, likely for much more than he ever expects to get. He apparently keeps in mind the proverbial maid-servant who prayed for a silk gown, which she never got, but she got one of the sleeves.

The preaching and praying prelude is as dull as it is silly. It is certainly among the ill-informed that Charles Haddon Spurgeon can pass as an orator. His diction is as trite as his thinking, and his conception as commonplace as his face and figure. Whatever God intended

him to be, he never intended him to be an orator. He has nothing, or next to nothing, of—

> 'Wit and words and worth,
> Action and utterance and the power of speech
> To stir men's blood.'

He is a glib speaker. So are all who have only two or three ideas, and who are not burdened with an extensive vocabulary. Mr Spurgeon makes use of no word that is not in the vocabulary of a dustman, and, apparently, for the best of all reasons. He evolves no thought which transcends a dustman's comprehension. God's purpose in creating Mr Spurgeon appears to have been to make sure that a good many dustmen should reach the kingdom of heaven, and I will not be presumptuous enough to say that they are not needed there.

It is when the preaching and praying prelude is over that the real comedy begins. Mr Spurgeon disappears, and his brother in the flesh and in the Lord, James Spurgeon, steps out from behind some red curtains in front of the platform, and, arrayed in fishing boots and a holy waterproof, wades as deep as the pelvis into the pond for gospel goslings.

On the right, emerging from behind the red curtains, came seven silly females, dressed in white from head to foot, and sloping up conically from the floor to the crown of the head. One of the silly females was a quondam maid-servant of mine; but there stood the seven in a row by the side of the tank—motionless, glistening, and conical, like seven huge sugar-loaves. From the height of Sugar-loaf No. 3, I conjectured that it was my quondam Abigail.

At a given signal, Sugar-loaf No. 1 stepped down into the vat, up to the waist in water. There she took her stand by the pork-butcher-looking person with the fishing-boots and the holy waterproof. And there stood the

she-noodle in white, with only one half of her visible above the water. The saint in the fishing-boots, ungallantly keeping himself dry while she was being soaked, insinuated his right hand beneath her tippet from behind, and laid his left hand affectionately upon her breast, just under the chin. Then says he, in the voice which saints assume when they mean to be supremely solemn: 'My dear sister in Christ, as an outward and visible testimony that you enter into communion with our Holy Church, by your own desire, I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.' The word 'ghost' is pronounced with a jerk, for the saint in oil-skin and over the haunches in water simultaneously pushes with the hand on the chest and pulls with the hand on the waist, and, in an instant, throws the 'dear sister of Christ' off her feet, and she falls back into the water with a splash, and it closes over her upturned face.

The waterproof saint, however, fishes her out and hands her to a person who stands on the margin of the holy pond in a sort of marble horse-trough. Another person stands opposite him, in an exactly similar marble horse-trough. This person of the second horse-trough throws a long white cloak over the drenched and dripping sister. This is necessary, as the thin and clinging wet garments would reveal to us the exact form and symmetry of the 'dear sister in Christ' in a manner that would demand the attention of the Lord Chamberlain. The two saints in the two horse-troughs have, altogether, the style and bearing suggestive of their having served their apprenticeship as barmen and chuckers-out in the Elephant and Castle tavern hard by. Each 'dear sister in Christ' is taken in turn, till the whole seven are drenched in the name of an unproven God, a fabulous Christ, and an incomprehensible Ghost.

One of the sacred sugar-loaves, as she was being im-

mersed, uttered two lusty squeals, that rang through the Tabernacle. Whether she feared she was going to be drowned outright, or whether she screamed under the influence of an excessive influx of the Holy Ghost, it is not for the like of me to determine. I did not hear any voice from heaven, and I saw no dove descending—indeed, if any fowl were represented there, it was not the dove, but the goose. The shrieking saint was hustled in behind the omnivorous red curtains, through the openings of which I had seraphic visions of bustling slippers and hands and petticoats, suggestive to me of the mysteries that were being enacted behind the veil.

Formerly each she-saint had to provide her own divine toggery; but this led to a want of uniformity in she-tailoring which was offensive to the eyes of the Lord and his elect. So, to obviate this, Mr Spurgeon now keeps a sort of divine haberdashery establishment, and lets out the sort of garments that the Lord loves at 2s. a-piece, and has them duly stiffened with Glenfield starch for each baptismal occasion. The 2s. includes a cup of coffee and a cooky in the name of the Lord, which the shivering one devours behind the curtains of crimson. The chat over the coffee, I am told, turns upon who stood 'it' (that is, the ducking) well, and who stood 'it' ill; and, as Mr Spurgeon's *clientèle* are more distinguished for piety than refinement, the baptismal badinage, if divine, is hardly parliamentary. I should not be surprised if the female who squealed twice under the influence of the Holy Spirit was not rallied upon the fact that she might have resisted the said Holy Spirit, and thereby have behaved more decorously, if she had only taken 'a quart'n o' gin 'ot.'

Then came the turn of the 'dear brothers in Christ,' who, dressed like convicts, minus the broad arrows, were standing in a row on the other side of the tank. The saint in waterproof stood up to his holy hurdies in water, and made quite a little speech over the first 'dear brother

in Christ.' This brother, we were advised, had 'found Jesus' in the centre of Persia (who would have thought of finding him there?), and had come all the way thence for the privilege of getting knocked heels over head into the sacred (but not over clean) water into which seven holy hoydens had been soused. After his ducking he was to go back to Persia 'to preach the blessed Gospel of Christ to the poor heathen of that benighted land.'

This ninny from glorious Iran of the olden ages was a tall, bald-headed holy one, his long, meaningless face and bald crown being of the colour of mahogany. He was tripped up like the women who had preceded him. Back went the mahogany head—the wood came in contact with the water — and the countryman of Xerxes sank with a plunge which sent the splashes into the eyes of those who sat too near this tomfoolery in the name of God. As he scrambled out to take refuge behind the red curtains he ran with his doubled backbone stuck up through his dark, dripping and clinging clothes. He looked ridiculously like a huge tom-cat that had escaped drowning by tearing its way through the sack in which it had been sunk along with a couple of big stones. No mantle of modesty was thrown over *his* retreating figure. God has made the male of the human race so uninteresting that nobody cares a straw anything about it.

Several things with starched collars and weak faces, of the mamma's-good-little-boy order, followed Xerxes into the goose-dub. The sight was too melancholy. For my race I drew a long sigh of pity and despair. I walked home to Brixton in the commingled light of the gas and the moon, and, to drown the feeling of humiliation that oppressed me, I buried myself among my books.

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REALITY.

THE maddest and bloodiest picture in the history of the world is a Christian picture. As the picture is wound off the reel of Time it is two centuries in length,* and is everywhere hideous with swords and skeletons and cinders. Like everything else in sacerdotal history, such a refulgent halo of sanctity and romance has been flung over it as to render its true and horrible lineaments almost imperceptible. It has been urged that the Crusades opened up and developed the resources of commerce, and conferred sundry other blessings upon the occidental nations. Perhaps so they did. But, if hell were to be established on Salisbury Plain, and burn all England to ten feet below the level of the Atlantic, theologians would tax their ingenuity to prove that the globe had benefited by the fiery destruction and everlasting immersion of England. Say what you may about the opening-up of commerce and the introduction of oriental culture, every footprint of the Crusades is marked with blood, every step is profaned with lust, every impulse is tainted with madness.

How was it that, for centuries before the first Crusade, under the polite permission of the caliphs of Bagdad, Christian pilgrims to the Holy Sepulchre had visited Jerusalem with impunity? How was it, if the Mohammedans were such perfidious and detested monsters, that the renowned Haroun al Raschid, with all the delicacy of oriental courtesy, sent the keys of Jerusalem as a friendly present to the Christian Charlemagne?

It was not till the incursions from the madhouses and

* The Crusades were carried on from the end of the eleventh till the end of the thirteenth century.

piggeries of Europe became intolerable, that caliph Hakem felt induced to put a curb upon the fanatical nuisance. If a polite and tolerant Mohammedan had still been caliph, the pilgrims might still have gone unscathed; but they had now to do with one of their own persecuting and intolerant breed. Caliph Hakem was *the son of a Christian woman.* Besides, the pilgrim nuisance had never been so abominable as now. The Rev. xx. 2-3 *canard* respecting the fast-approaching end of the world,* had poured into Europe a religious rabblement without precedent in the previous ages. Numbers of devout wastrels managed to return from their pious peddling Jerusalemward, and to represent how they had been snubbed and kicked by the subjects of the Fatamite caliphs. Nobody seemed to mind whether the pilgrims had been snubbed and kicked or not—perhaps thinking that, even if they had been, they had got only their deserts—till a clapper-tongued religious lunatic, Monk Peter of Amiens, known as Peter the Hermit, magnified his kicking into an outrage upon Christendom, and thereby unscrewed the sluices which poured forth rivers of human blood, heaped Asia Minor with human skeletons, and made history march for two hundred years up and down a hideous Golgotha.

"Is," bawled Peter, "the land which was trodden by the feet of the blessed Redeemer to be soiled and insulted by the sandals of the followers of the Camel-Driver of Islam? Is it possible that over Tabor, the scene of the Transfiguration—over Olivet, from which the Saviour ascended into heaven—the Crescent banner of an alien faith shall be permitted to wave? Shall the Infidel be allowed to perform his revolting rites over the site of the manger at Bethlehem? Shall a race that knows not the Lord jabber its pagan litanies in the Garden of Gethsemane, and by the Pool of Siloam? Shall the muezzin sound where sounded the voice of Jesus? Shall the spot be blasted with desecration whence the cross flung its shadow down the brow of Calvary, and shall heathen scimitars guard the Holy Grave where the body of the Lord was laid, the spices and the myrrh

* See Saladin's "The Divine Interpretation of Scripture: A Reply to Cardinal Manning."

of his entombment mingling with the blood from his hands and feet and wounded side and thorn-pierced brow—the blood of God himself, designed to redeem a lost world from the eternal torments of the damned? Is this, and the insult and murder of the pilgrims to the tomb of God, to be endured? By the arm of Omnipotence, No! Are there no hearts in Europe, no swords in Christendom—is there no blood in France that is ready to be shed to avenge the sacrilege to the blood that darkened the rough bark of the tree at Calvary at the hour when Death and Hell were conquered; when the sun grew dark in the heavens, when the veil of the Temple was rent and the graves of Salem gave up their dead? For the blood of the Son of God are ye prepared to give the blood of the sons of Men? In this case, he who would save his life shall lose it. May torment unutterable be his who would for a moment think of his safety or his life, when the God who gave them demands that they be laid down in his cause! Horse and stirrup, sword and lance, the spear, the gipon, and the shirt of mail! Rush on their battalia like a boiling torrent, and hurl the Infidel to Death and Hell, or may Tophet and agony eternal wait upon you and yours, even to the end of the world! To Jerusalem! to Jerusalem! Rescue the Holy Sepulchre! Hear in my voice the voice of Doom, and see in the heavens the arm of the Almighty waving you on to the East to rescue the tomb where his Son was laid!"

The response was a roar of voices and a clash of swords. "*Deus vult*," quoth the monks; and the laity murmured, "It is the will of God." So much for the oratory of Peter, puny, ragged, and dirty, bareheaded, barefooted, riding on an ass, and driven crazy by the naggings of a vixenish wife much older than himself.

Thus, or somehow thus, were the orations of the Hermit, and accompanied by forceful and vehement gesticulations, and hissed and thundered and gasped with all the intensity and fury of fanatical rhetoric; and their effect may easily be imagined upon an age that was romantic or nothing, and a people strongly disposed to religious emotion and martial enterprise. The oratory of the Hermit set France on fire. The land seethed and

boiled and reeled under the lava and detonations of an oratorical volcano. Wild dreams usurped the place of sober, waking life. A mad medley rushed to Peter to offer their services to him or to whoever would lead them to Judea to rescue the Holy Sepulchre.

Provisions and modes of transport were overlooked. All classes and conditions of men flew to arms and insisted upon being led at once to Jerusalem. The sick rose from the bed of disease or death; the lame and crippled came with their staves and crutches; the noble brought his riches, and the beggar his wallet. Women left their spindles and their cows, their embroidery and their tapestry, to don helmet and gauntlets and carry sword and flame into the Holy Land. And, rapidly, helter-skelter, from all quarters, came the miscreant and the scoundrel, the liar, the thief, the ravisher, and the murderer, for had not Pope Urban II. and his priests promised absolution from all sin to whomsoever should take up arms to win back to Christendom the Tomb of Jesus? Christendom put weapons in the hands of all its scoundrelism and harness on the backs of all its villainy, and hounded them on frantically to slaughter in the name of him who has been called the Prince of Peace! A Goose and a Goat were borne in front of the excited rabblement, the one well symbolising its folly and the other its lechery. Its horrible cruelty was above symbolisation; it was written with sword and torch in a long trail of over 600 miles, proceeding from the centre of France till lost in the wilds of Syria.

The great multitude which no man could number surged about in its hundreds of thousands, leaving all to God, but somehow breaking itself up into three huge armies, the first led by Gaultier Habenichts, known in France as "Sans Avoir," and in England as "Walter the Penniless." The second army was under the command of Peter the Hermit, in person; and the third was led by Gottschalk, a monk, raving mad with religious fanaticism.

Away rolled these armies Palestineward, a surging, muddy, and boiling river of the social scum and refuse of Europe. The very sort of rabble that the Roman historians tell us first embraced the Christian faith now,

eleven centuries later, laid on the Christian shrine the offering of their filthy hearts and dirty swords. And now, some six centuries later still, the scum of England lays its rowdy hymn and horrid tambourine on the shrine of the same faith—ever the same rabid rabble through all the centuries, whether it follow General Booth or Walter the Penniless! I mourn the fact, and, with all the valour of despair, set myself to the task of Sisyphus.

"Is that Jerusalem?" was the cry of the ignorant host whenever on their march a town came in sight. If the leaders, many of whom were nearly as ignorant as their followers, had led their hosts to Rome, Paris, or London, and cried, "There is Jerusalem!" these European capitals would have been razed to the ground, and the first stone pig-sty discovered in any of them would probably have been hailed as the Holy Sepulchre, and any hog's bristles collected therein would likely have been adored as the hairs of Jesus. On, dying by hundreds and thousands, the motley multitude pursued its way, and the wolf followed for the carnival of human flesh, and great coveys of ravens and vultures darkened the sky overhead. On, in front, went the Goat and the Goose, and on, behind, followed every fool (and worse) with the sign of the cross upon his shoulder, symbolical of the two transverse sticks to which his deity was alleged to have been nailed. But carpenter or tom-cat, god or cockroach, would have served equally well as a peg upon which to hang the antics of ignorant fanaticism.

Slaughter, rapine, and ravishment were the order of the day wherever the hosts of the Crusaders rolled. Having made no provisions for their march, leaving that to "Providence," they ate up and devoured everything that lay within reach. Those who resisted their rapine were run through the body with spears, or cleft to the chin with axes, as enemies of God, and their wives and daughters were violated, and then butchered by the soldiers of Jesus on their march to thrust back the Infidel from the stone sepulchre that had belonged to Joseph of Arimathea. The Crusading camp itself—containing thousands of she-fanatics from Christendom—was a saturnalia of barbarous licentiousness. Loose rein was given to almost unheard-of and unprecedented iniquities,

for had not the Church impressed upon the mob the assurance that taking up arms against the Infidel was an atonement for every possible transgression, and that all who now set out for the Old Jerusalem on earth had thereby secured an incontestible right to enter the New Jerusalem in heaven?

What disease and debauchery and famine had left of the holy rabble trailed along through Hungary. The Hungarians hailed them as brother Christians bound upon a sacred errand, and wished them God-speed. But they soon discovered that the pious Crusaders were only a horde of impious fiends, who repaid hospitality with cruelty, rapine, and lust. This was too much for the Hungarians. Stung to retaliation by deeds of wrong, outrage and base ingratitude, they flew to arms, and falling upon the disordered rear of the Crusaders, saved some thousands of them the trouble of proceeding any further towards the Holy Land by leaving their corpses to rot on the plains of Hungary. On the still numerous remnant swarmed into Bulgaria. The Bulgarians flew to arms to guard the mountain passes against the murdering and ravishing demons of the Red Cross; and hundreds and thousands, instead of being privileged to set foot on the Holy Land or cross swords with the Infidel, under the weapons of brother Christians, left their bodies to feed the eagles of the Thracian hills.

At last, about one-third of the horde that left France, footsore and worn, haggard and gaunt, hungry, ragged, and naked, malodorous from putrid wounds, wild with hardship, mad with fanaticism, and festering with vermin, staggered into Constantinople, the unquenchable fire of theological frenzy still blazing within them, and urging them on to Jerusalem and the tomb, where their carpenter and world-maker was alleged to have lain.

The experiences of the multitude under the Hermit were much the same as those of the multitude that followed Walter the Penniless. Of them too, a miserable remnant reached Constantinople. The third army, under Gottschalk, never got so far. It was treacherously fallen upon by the Hungarians and put to the sword, no man or woman being allowed to escape to tell the tale. And yet their fate was, perhaps, less tragic than that of their

brethren, who, by dint of strong constitution and indomitable hardihood, had reached Constantinople. They crossed over into Syria, only to be mowed down like grass under the sharp and crooked scimitars of the very Infidel Turks they, under the auspices of their deity, had set out so confidently to vanquish. And all this in thy blessed memory, O Jesus! Here were ravages of fire and sword, to which the destruction of the army of Xerxes is almost insignificant, and the retreat of Napoleon from blazing Moscow to

> "Berescina's icy flood,
> Riven with shot and thawed with blood."

Still mad with priestcraft, indomitable and undaunted, Christendom poured out her treasure and her life to drive the Infidel from the Holy Land. But all in vain. The votaries of the Camel-Driver had still the best of it against the followers of the Carpenter. The excesses and crimes of the Christians had been such that, at length, it occurred to them that their non-success might be heaven's retaliation upon them for their wickedness. Damascus, they became convinced, could not be taken by the guilty; so they determined to try the effect of a siege by the innocent. Accordingly, *an army of children* was the craze of the year 1212. A contemporary monkish chronicler writes: "There came together, from different countries, I know not how, so many children that they made a formidable army. These little ones had standards carried before them, setting forth that they were going to cross the sea, and that the Holy Land had been assigned to them as an inheritance, as it had been to the children of Israel. In whatever town they arrived, the inhabitants received them in the name of God."

This army of child Crusaders was led by a boy named Nicolas, a native of Cologne. Two ship-loads of Crusading children were embarked at Genoa; but they never reached Palestine. The boys were sold as slaves and the girls to the oriental harems of the Infidel. The children had been taught to expect that the Mediterranean would divide, as the Red Sea had done before the Israelites, and let them pass over to

Syria on dry land. But when the poor little dupes found that the Mediterranean would not oblige in the manner they had been led to expect it would, as many as could find room were crowded into the two ships, and of the thousands left behind, the greater number died of starvation, and all for the traditional grave of this priest-invented Jew!

More than one army of children took the cross and were equipped for the Holy Land; but only to the advantage of the slave-owner and the master of the harem. And the Christian chroniclers are compelled to admit that certain monks and traders were active in getting up child-crusades in order that they might enrich themselves by shipping off the boys to be sold for slavery, and the girls for prostitution. And all this in thy name and for thy glory, O Jesus; and here, nearly nineteen centuries after thy alleged crucifixion, I am called an "Infidel," because I yearn to waken Man from the nightmare of Priestcraft, and lead him forth into the bracing morning of a more rational and a happier world!

The Christians teach that man was made in the image of God, and that his body is "the temple of the Holy Ghost;" and yet they voraciously ate "the temple of the Holy Ghost"—roast infant, and occasionally roast adult, appeared on the tables or turned on the spits of the Crusaders. Moreover, in the plain of Nice alone, the Infidel piled up a mountain* of Christian bones; and at a subsequent siege the crusaders themselves made use of cartloads of human corpses to construct a military rampart. So much for the use to which they put the ruins of certain temples of the Holy Ghost!

"Not fair to visit all this upon the Church—only the barbarism of the times," urges the Christian apologist. "You, sir, distort and travesty history to suit your purposes as a special pleader." Not so, Stiggins of Bethel, as regards the barbarous excesses of the Christians and their thirst for retaliation, blood and savagery. We go to the "Infidel" for magnanimity and mercy, and to the "Faithful" for pusillanimity and cruelty. We have room for one contrast only between the followers of him who

* Anna Comnena describes the pile as *οστων κολονος* and as *ύψηλον και βαθος και πλατος αξιολογωτατον.*

drove a camel and the votaries of him who rode upon an ass.

When, in 637, Jerusalem surrendered at discretion after a four months' siege, Ali, the general of the Arabian forces, sent, in accordance with one of the terms of capitulation, to request that the caliph should come in person to ratify the articles and take possession. The master of Persia and Syria rode, in the most simple and unostentatious manner, from Medina to Jerusalem on a red camel, carrying a bag of corn and one of dates, a wooden dish, and a leathern water-bottle. On his arrival he issued the following proclamation :—

IN THE NAME OF THE MOST MERCIFUL GOD.

From Omar Ebno'l Alchitâb to the inhabitants of Œlia. They shall be protected and secured, both in their lives and their fortunes, and their churches shall neither be pulled down nor made use of by any but themselves.

The caliph rode into the city by the side of Sophronius the patriarch, conversing on the antiquities of the place. When the hour of prayer struck they were in the Church of the Resurrection. The patriarch bade the caliph pray where he was (that was in a Christian church); but he would not. He then took him into the Church of Constantine (another Christian church), and laid a mat for him to pray there; but he still refused. At last, he went out alone, and knelt on the steps outside. He afterwards told the patriarch that he had refused to pray in any Christian church because, had he done so, his followers might have seized it, and thereby broken his promise to the Christians to respect their places of religious worship. He further enjoined that even on the steps they should pray only singly, nor should they meet there to go to prayers, nor should the muezzin stand there to call the people to prayer, lest thereby the Moslems might annoy the conquered Christians. This knightly faith and magnanimous toleration was natural to a cultivated and learned race, among whom were ever circulating such maxims as: "The ink of the doctor is equally valuable with the blood of the martyr;" "Paradise is as much for him who has rightly used the pen as for him who has fallen by the sword;" "The world is

sustained by four things only—the learning of the wise, the justice of the great, the prayers of the good, and the valour of the brave."

We have seen the Infidel picture of the capture of Jerusalem; now let us see the Christian one. When, at last, the ramparts and towers of the Holy City yielded to the battering-engines of Godfrey, the Christian victory was signalised not by courteous and magnanimous restraint, but by sanguinary and relentless massacre. Three mortal days the Crusaders gave up to the work of carnage. Far from their, like Omar, respecting the religious convictions of the vanquished, they burned the Jews to death in their synagogues, and mixed with the ruins of the captured city the bodies of 70,000 Moslems whom they had slain with the sword. Down blazed the sun upon fire-blackened and siege-shattered masonry, upon stones, and rafters, and mud caked deep with gore, and the stench grew insupportable. A plague ensued, and many of the Christian victors mingled their plague-stricken corpses with those of the 70,000 Moslems who had escaped the fever that followed by having previously perished by the sword.

Drenched with the blood of 70,000 of the defenceless vanquished, the Christians ascended the hill of Calvary with all the paraphernalia of monks and crucifixes, candles, banners, incense, and anthems, and performed their incantations on the mount upon which their baleful Galilean was said to have perished. They kissed the stone (or some stone or other) which had covered the mouth of his grave, and perpetrated religious antics in honour of the "redeemer" who has blighted the world.

True, certain of the later of the Seven Crusades were better managed than the first; but they were all alike mad and detestable and bloody. The most romantic of them all was the third, in which that big, steel-shirted swashbuckler and adulterer, and something else unspeakable, Richard Cœur de Lion, bore such a prominent part. "*Help us the Holy Grave, O God!*" was the battle-cry under which he and his Knights Templar and Hospitallers rushed, in heavy Teuton lustihood, among the slim and comparatively unarmed felaheen, and mowed them down like grass before the scythe. When before Ascalon it

was his boast, that every day he brought back to his tent ten, twelve, or twenty heads of Infidels he had slain—slain for the difference between Tweedledum and Tweedledee, the difference between the Camel-Driver of Mecca and the Carpenter of Bethlehem.

Killing an Infidel was to him much the same as shooting a partridge is to a modern sportsman. There had been abundance shed for Jesus during the preceding centuries; but now every drop of blood said to have reddened the cross at Calvary demanded a river of human gore. He who said, "I came not to bring peace, but a sword," redeemed his promise, and the land of his birth was drunk with massacre. On the surrender of Acre to his followers, they bargained that a piece of the true cross which had been captured from them should be restored, and that the sum of 200,000 talents should be paid to them. For the payment of this sum Cœur de Lion held the prisoners taken at Acre as hostages. Saladin, the one glorious name connected with the Crusades, failed to raise the money from his financially-exhausted people, and Richard deliberately led 2,700 hostages outside the city walls and gave his soldiers holiday sport in beheading them. The pastime was intensely enjoyed, and participated in with joke and jest, and laughter and oath, 2,700 heads lay there in ghastly heaps, and 2,700 headless corpses reeked in the hot Syrian sun. The followers of the son of Mary had stripped to their work. Their blades were red from point to hilt; their faces were bespattered with, and their clothes were soaked with blood. They stood in blood to the ankles, and stumbled and reeled over corpses, bandying their slang and chanting their songs of bawd and revel. Glorious amusement! they had butchered the defenceless prisoners in the name of the Nazarene! The sun went down upon that Aceldama, and in the groves and vineyards of Palestine died away the Crusader's vesper cry: "*Help us the Holy Grave, O God!*"

ROMANCE.

———

At Ascalon, Richard I. was seized with fever. But even severe illness could not abate the warlike ardour of his temperament; and when he could no longer stand upon his feet, he ordered that he should be carried in front of the walls on a litter, that he might superintend operations, and incite the Christians to a vigorous prosecution of the siege.

Ha! ha! my veins are raging hot,
  My hectic senses reel!
Pshaw, fever! Bring my harness, squire,
  My morion of steel.
I cannot live supine like this,
  And die like coward slave;
Ho, reeling front of battle be
  The death-bed of the brave!

No, no, my Berengaria!
  Take that bandage from my head;
And bring me, gentle wife of mine,
  The iron helm instead:
And put thy snow-white favour
  In my plume, so dark and high;
Steel harness be my winding-sheet,
  A soldier let me die!

Know, in this sainted Palestine,
  The Saviour died for me;
And my good sword and strong right arm,
  Shall strike for Him, and thee.

And ne'er shall heathen sandals tread,
And heathen banners wave;
O'er the garden of His agony,
The glory of His grave!

No! o'er the Moslem turban,
And the flashing scimitar;
We'll pour the hosts of England,
In the thunder-crash of war.
On, warriors of the high crusade,
Bended bow and swinging sword;
And wave o'er pagan Ascalon
The banner of the Lord!

Gird on my heavy armour,
Bring my war-horse from the stall;
Sound the trumpet, shout Jehovah!
Forward, onward to the wall!
Come, gentle Berengaria,
Through the vizor bars a kiss;
And I'll leave to weak old women,
A dying bed like this.

Let Leopold of Austria
Die thus, when die he may;
Let craven Philip breathe his last,
Far from the battle fray.
The couch of Richard Lion-heart,
Must be the crimson sod,
Where, 'neath the bannered cross, he fought
For glory and for God.

See, holy Carmel's dark with shame,
Red blushes Jordan's tide;
That Saladin should hold a day,
The land where Jesus died.
Ho! where the dead lie thickest,
Upon earth's groaning breast,
At eve, search for King Richard,
And lay him to his rest!

And not in dear old England,
Lay you your leader dead;
But deep within this holy land,
Lay you his helmèd head.
Not English oak, but Syrian palm,
Shall guard his soldier's grave;
In the sainted land he lived to love,
The land he died to save!

Oh, Salem, for thy Holy Tomb,
Oh, England for thy throne,
King Death shall find King Richard,
With his armour girded on:
He'll greet thee, King of Terrors,
O'er Jordan's mortal flood,
With a forehead wreathed in laurel,
And a hand imbrued in blood!

Come, laggard knights, I charge you,
Haste, ere the sun go down;
And bear me on your shoulders,
To the ramparts of the town!
Plunge him amid the battle shock,
The grapple, yell, and groan;
That Death may find King Richard,
With his armour girded on!

Vicarious Suffering.

OUR SANCTIONS FOR CRUELTY.

BY

SALADIN.

(Reprinted from the "Agnostic Journal.")

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*** Under name and pen-name, some of the most scholarly and able writers of the age contribute regularly to THE AGNOSTIC JOURNAL; and, although the Editorial policy is opposed to the popular and dominant faith, the columns of the journal are ever open to articles in defence of Christianity from clergymen or lay Christians of recognized ability, while considerable space is devoted to the investigation of Theosophy, Spiritualism, Mysticism, etc.

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VICARIOUS SUFFERING.

"MAN'S inhumanity to man" is the blight and canker and bane of human life. In recent decades human ingenuity has been, in part, directed to such benignant inventions as the steam-engine and the electric telegraph and telephone. But, anterior to those decades, for century upon century, man's mechanical ingenuity was principally directed to the production of instruments of torture, to contrivances which applied to those mystic harp-strings, the human nerves, could evoke every note in the gamut of agony.

In the Ages of Faith, in the ages in which the Church which claimed, and still claims, to be of Christ was supreme, we had no telescope, no gas-light, no railway, no printing-press; but we had the rack, the wheel, the boots, the thumb-screw, the witch's bridle, the Iron Virgin, and other torture-engines too numerous and devilish to be catalogued here. In our museums you can still behold preserved specimens of these mechanical horrors. The sight of them makes *me* shudder: then, what effect must their hellish spectacle of rust and horror have upon *you*, O Orthodoxist, when you remember that it was almost exclusively in the service of the Church that that rack tore human joints out of their sockets, that the boots there

held the leg of a human being till blood from the ruptured veins and marrow from the shattered bone splashed in the face of him who, with swinging hammer, drove home the merciless wedges? Here is heresy, some incomprehensibly subtle doctrinal distinction contemned: then, tighten the wedges, apply the hammer; as weighed against the crime of heresy how trifling are blood and marrow and anguish and agony!

Were grimly fanatical believers culpably inconsistent with their creed in thus mangling their fellow human beings? Did not the Lord, at the very outset of his career with man, shew that he preferred the red blood of the veins to the red flush of the rose? Did he not prefer the fat of Abel's veal to the fragrance of Cain's violets?

CAIN: Poor Abel! he was but a shepherd boy,
Who offered up the firstlings of his flocks
In order to appease Jehovah's wrath,
Who revelled in the pangs and dying groans
Of the poor beasts who never did him wrong.
My heart revolted at the cruel sport. 'Twas I
Refused to torture gentle innocents,
But, taking fruit, I offered it to Him,
Altho' 'twas mock'ry, seeing *all* was His.
SPIRIT: Fruit would not do. The Lord has ordered blood.
CAIN: My brother, as a shepherd, offered lambs,
And I, as husbandman, did offer fruit.
Methought the offering of one's toil is best acceptable.
SPIRIT: Blood, dying pangs, the torture of the innocent,
Alone appeases the Almighty's wrath.
CAIN: Ay! to the shame of all created things,
Thou speakest true—He loveth blood!*

Did not the entire wheel of the Christians' faith turn upon the pivot of blood and suffering? Was not the man-god in whom they believed nailed, hand and foot, to the bitter cross? Painters, poets, theologians and historians, have testified to the pain and ignomy of crucifixion. It was not

* Lady Florence Dixie, in "Abel Avenged," in Part II. of "The Songs of a Child."

mere execution, as we now understand the word; it was studied torture. In being nailed, or lashed, to the cross, no vital organ of the victim was affected. Crucifixion was, with hellish ingenuity, designed to elicit and stimulate all the suffering of which the nerves of the culprit were capable, even to the last spasm and writhe of anguish and agony. A strong culprit has been known to hang on the cross for several days, before exposure to the sun, hunger, slow hæmorrhage and fiery thirst brought death in merciful relief.

And this is the revolting and horrible torture to which the Church deliberately and dogmatically subjected her man-deity. Lest the horror upon which her very existence rested should be overlooked or forgotten, crucifixes with a tortured and nude human figure nailed thereto were exhibited everywhere, in wood, in stone, on canvas. And, as if this were not enough of the cruel and the horrible, the twelve "Stations of the Cross," each more shudderingly revolting than the other, were invented and forced, in all their repellant gruesomness, upon the wild and sanguinary imagination of an unlettered public. Blood! Blood! Blood everywhere! "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission." "Except ye eat my flesh and drink my blood, there is no life in you."

This horrible dithyramb with the refrain of "Blood" only too truculently commended itself to the fierce races in the fields of Christian mission. Blood, not brain. Brain was crude, credulous and inchoate, and applied its raw rapacity to blood and the merciless shedding thereof. Zealots, bigots, their god had been tortured, and they, not incoherently, took to inventing instruments "for His name's sake." Habituation to the idea of crucifixion—"and, being in agony, He prayed more earnestly, and the sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling

down to the ground"—hardened all the more gentle and tender humanitarian instincts, as daily contemplation of cruel and morbid topics inevitably will. And, here, in London, only a few years ago, we had, on exhibition, a collection of torture-engines by which, through dark and bloody ages, on the scaffold and in the dungeon, the Gospel had been protected in its purity against the taint of heresy.

Perdition to the church that required such engines to protect her against heresy! Now, on every side, she is assailed by heresy—nay, by blank unbelief; and this contumacious journal is, every week, hurled in her teeth in defiant scorn. Yet who will say that, in spite of this, the world is not better than it was at the time when this serial would have been in the flames and its editor on the rack?

Blood! Blood! "There is a fountain filled with blood." Well, disinfect the abhorrent nuisance and fill it up with rubble: scatter over it a layer of rich and generous mould; there let the wholesome green grass wave round the rathe roses of Reason and the white lilies of Peace. Can it be wondered at that this habituation to the conception of the sanguinary and horrible has rendered Christianity the bloodiest agency that has ever cursed the earth with its presence? I fearlessly appeal to history in corroboration of my averment. "I come not to bring peace, but a sword," is a dictum put into the mouth of the clumsily-invented myth from whom the faith of the vulgar takes its name. Yes, and, by Heaven, the sword came, and came to stay; and with it came ignorance and superstition and bigotry, and cruelty and rancour and hate. "The Lamb of the Great Sacrifice" was hoisted on the back of The Ass of the Great Credulity, and the Dark Ages was the result, and the darkness of the Dark Ages flings its penumbra upon the vaunted illumination of to-day to a degree that he who looks upon Society conventionally little suspects.

Not only did the "glad tidings of great joy"—O mordant irony!—tend to the reckless and merciless waste of life; but, by a far hotter and more real hell than any previous faith had known, it lent new terrors to death. Never, before Christianity was devised, was it discovered that there was any sting in death worth speaking of. Ask the death-bed memories of certain sincere Christians of the type of John Bunyan and William Cowper, in their raving terror, how Christianity takes away the sting from death; and, if I, like them, were a Christian, I feel certain that my death-bed would be as shudderingly terrible as was theirs. There are, I know, many Christians who feel quite sure that they will "fall asleep in Jesus," and who console themselves by repeating maudlin, nauseous, and meaningless Gospel tags. They know that the vast majority of human kind go to perdition, but they have the despicable self-conceit to believe that *they* have been selected from that overwhelming majority, that *they* are members of that select few, that mere handful, the elect, that *they* have "found Jesus," that *they* have been "washed in the blood of the Lamb," and much else of canting commonplace. And, in their selfish meanness, they feel idiotically happy—although, practically, the whole of the rest of the world is to be lost. And only by this intensely selfish and self-conceited imbecility does Christianity "take away the sting from death." Plato knew how to die, ignorant of this sting-extracting process; and so did Socrates, so did Cato, so did Epaminondas, so did Cocles, so did Cæsar, so did Julian.

He who mercilessly drowned a multitude of swine, after, in his superstitious ignorance, he deemed he had put devils into them, cannot be cited as a zoophilist. Buddha and Mahomet alike insisted upon kindness to the "lower" animals; but where did Jesus utter one word that can be quoted enjoining upon us kindly treatment

of our poor non-human fellow-mortals? We find attributed to him a number of fatuous utterances like, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven"; "I and my father are one"; and "The father is greater than I." But he never once said: "Be merciful to the ass"; "Be kind to the dog"; or "Liberate the slave." And, consistently enough, till this hour, the countries professing the faith that bears his name are by far the cruellest and zoomistic in the world.

Even while I write, in Spain, the most Christian country in Europe, a bull-fight* on a more than ordinarily colossal scale is being arranged, and which will involve reeking slaughters and horrors in which the Mahometan could never participate, and which the Buddhist would rather die than sanction. By far the best organized and numerically strongest section of the Church that bears Christ's name formulates thus, in brutal candour, in "The Catholic Dictionary," published under the imprimatur of Cardinal Vaughan: "The brutes are made for man, who has the same right over them that he has over plants and stones. He may, according to the express permission of God, given to Noe, kill them for his food, and this without strict necessity; it must also be lawful to put them to death or to inflict pain on them for any good or reasonable end, such as the promotion of man's knowledge, health, etc., or even for the purposes of recreation."

There are, however, humanitarians among the Papists, as among the Protestants, men and women nobler than, and unconsciously in revolt against, their creed. For instance, the Christian pietist, Frances Power Cobbe, denounces Vivisection as "to the last degree un-Christian"; and then, by a *tour de force* of the glaring inconsistency to which Christian apologists are driven, she admits:

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* See p. 13.

"This abominable sentiment, and all the cruelty to man and brute of which it has been the promoter, remains after twenty centuries of Christianity almost unnoticed by the churches of Christ. No moralist—so far as my small knowledge extends, whether Catholic or Protestant —no father, no schoolman, no casuist of later times, no Protestant preachers, have denounced Cruelty and the Pleasure in Pain with anything approaching to the nature of its moral delinquency."

Again: "If we really accepted the precept of Love to all and under all conditions as the supreme Divine Law, should we not regard the sin of positively torturing and taking pleasure in the sight of torture as the very last and worst of offences? Should not the early Christian teachers, when they mapped out the Seven Deadly Sins, have placed Cruelty the very first on the list? What were they doing, and what has the Church of Rome been doing ever since, to tell us that Sloth, Covetousness, Lust, Anger, Envy, Pride, and even Gluttony are mortal sins, and say not one word about Cruelty to man or beast?

Again: "Even our own English minds (through whole regions of which the old Roman theology and morals still unconsciously dribble) rarely take in the idea that the supreme Vice is Cruelty, that while all other vices degrade man to the level of the beast, Cruelty sinks him to that of the fiend. When we speak of Vice commonly, we think of sexual vice or intemperance. We do not think of that Vice of which—so it seems to me—we must, if guilty, repent through all the cycles of our immortality."* Yes, Miss Cobbe, and to this Vice of all the vices that "most holy religion" of yours is not appreciably opposed, in either theory or practice!

That truculent Romish dictum I have quoted gives full warranty, not only to hunting our fellow-mortals to

* *Contemporary Review*, May, 1902.

death for "sport," but gives sanction to the hideous horrors exposed in a brochure * which I have glanced at and closed with a shudder. Jesus was crucified to secure our spiritual, and now, consistently enough with that immoral and revolting proposition, dogs and cats and rabbits and guinea-pigs are being vivisected to secure our physical well-being. In the name of Mercy, who and what are we that both god and dog should suffer and die for us? I who, till recently, was endowed with far above the normal strength and agility, and could leap a five-bar gate, was wont to feel more proud of the feat than that of writing an "At Random"; but I have now, through a nerve-malady, to move cautiously, and not over steadily, along by the aid of a staff. Yet, even were the torture of the mouse, exhibited in figure 447, to disclose the neurotic secret that would again make me a swift-footed Achilles, I should, unscathed, set the "wee bit creepin', timorous beastie" free. What right have I to make his impotency my potency, to make his woe my weal?

In Figure 503*b*, these Christian vivisectionists have actually stuck up a rabbit with a nail through each foot and in an attitude grimly suggestive of their man-god upon the cross. The brutal burlesque is theirs, not mine. But in the figures on page 158, the cat, my favourite among all the animals, is exposed in three attitudes of vivisectional agony. I finish this at "the wee short hour ayont the twal," and go to bed to pass a sleepless night. Visions of my lost friend, the "Prodigal

* Catalogue of apparatus and appliances for experiments with animals, issued by F. and M. Lautenschlager, Berlin. Translated into English by Paul Grünfeld, who was nominated at the request of the National Anti-Vivisection Society, by the librarian of the British Museum. The illustrations, which have been reproduced by photographic zinco-etching, are fac-similes of the originals, and have been placed beside the letterpress as they appear in the original catalogue. Second Edition.—Twentieth Thousand. Printed for The National Anti-Vivisection Society, 92, Victoria Street, London.

Son," will pass before me, between my closed but sleepless eyes and heaven's dome filled with the awful stars. His remains lie affectionately interred in the small plot of garden behind my home in London, and a giant Scots thistle from Galloway keeps vigil over his grave.

My ever tenderly remembered "Prodigal Son," who was young and happy, and to whom life was dear, yet died like a philosopher. I feel convinced that he knew he was dying; but he died like a hero. He knew he was dying; but he knew nothing about the sting having been taken from death by the reputed sacrifice of an old-time carpenter; he did not know that death had ever had any special sting. As I nursed him, he only looked up with a deep and tender mournfulness into my tearful eyes. I have among "my puir earth-born companions and fellow mortals," had pet pigs, pet bullocks, pet horses, pet rats, pet sheep, pet crows and pet owls. I never had the self-conceit to feel myself so superior to any of them that I presumed to regard them as subordinates; I regarded them as friends, and (I wish I could say the same of the human animal) not one of them ever betrayed me.

I read inexpressible volumes of pathos in the countenance of my expiring feline friend. His teeth, which he had often used upon me playfully, were visible between his parted lips, as he panted for laborious breath. And, as he cast upon me his last look, there was an eloquence therein which can never be expressed in any weak words of mine. It meant: "Dearest friend, Saladin, my poor green eyes, of which you were the delight, are closing. I am in pain. It is growing dark. My one regret is, I shall see you no more."

I am aware that what I here express is only the emotionalism of an intense zoophilist who sometimes feels inclined to doubt that "the lower animals" are the lower animals at all, it being difficult to get lower than the

average J. Smith, and impossible to get lower than the lowest J. Smith.

If, in the awful arcanum of inexorable Fate, I cannot have my soul saved without a tortured Christ, or my body cured without a vivisected Cat, let soul and body perish. I am not without egoistic self-esteem; but I have also moral self-respect, and this latter revolts at my accepting of weal at the cost of another's woe. Barbaric conception of pristine savages! If my soul cannot be saved without another's blood and agony—Let it be lost. Doom, I face thee and whatever thou mayest have in reserve for me; and I decline to escape my weird through the anguish of a Christ on the Cross, or, through its natural sequence, the agony of a Cat on the "Operation Board." GOD, whom I cannot formulate in thought, but whom I meet in ecstatic vision, THOU wilt not permit me to be lost because I decline to accept of a cruel coward's method of being saved.

A CHRISTIAN HOLIDAY.*

THE hold the ring has on Spain is enormous. There are four weekly journals in Madrid devoted solely to the interests and literature of the bull-ring. There are dozens of books written on the subject, and on every day of a fight Madrid is simply painted green with copies of the "Programa de Espectaculos," a four-page sheet sold for a penny by hundreds, perhaps thousands, of hawkers.

This gives pictures of the bulls to be slaughtered on the day in question, their pedigrees and owners and short histories of the animals, together with the names of all the performers in the day's spectacle. About an hour before the time for the show to begin the picadores, dressed in their clumsy but picturesque costume, set out from their hotel in the Puerta del Sol for the Plaza de Toros, about a mile away.

These gentry are mounted on fine horses, not the sorry hacks they use in the ring, and are followed by immense crowds of admiring men, women, and children, who consider it an honour to be near the heroes.

At this time of the year the spectacle begins at about four, earlier or later, according to the number of animals to be killed. The scene for a couple of hours before this time beggars description. A sense of furious struggle, wild desire, fierce eagerness hangs over the city—comes pouring down with the rays of the hot sun, rises with the dust from the suffocating streets, gets into the blood of every Madrileno, and compels him or her—for women go to bull-fights in their thousands—to make a mad rush for the place of slaughter.

Even if he cannot afford to enter the show—and it is an old saying that a Spaniard will sell his shirt to go

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* *Daily Express*, May 21st, 1902.

to a bull-fight—to be near the ring is something. Perhaps he may hear a wounded bull bellow with rage or a dying horse scream in his agony, and he is certain to see the chief actors come or go.

Private carriages, with well-dressed men and daintily-clad women, electric trams succeeding each other with amazing rapidity, each laden to the full with sweltering humanity (or inhumanity), horse and mule trams that use no rails, but clatter madly over the cobbles, extra omnibuses, and open cars drawn by five, six, or eight red-tasselled mules, all dash at full gallop for the Plaza de Toros to turn out their loads and tear back for more.

As the time grows short they come only part of the way back and turn at the half-way mark to hurry on belated stragglers. It is not gay, it is feverish, exciting, bewildering. Men's faces are set and keen. There is no badinage or merriment, even if it were possible, while thundering over the ill-paved streets. The one idea is to get to the fight quickly. Anger is swift to the surface, drivers are urged and sworn at, and woe be to the wretched horse or mule that stumbles. He is greeted with a shower of curses from roof and window of the vehicle and flogged unmercifully by his driver.

If anyone is of opinion that bull-fighting does not brutalize these people, let him watch the crowd that goes to the Plaza de Toros any Sunday in Madrid. He need not go inside the amphitheatre—he will see enough outside to change his mind.

We are having fights nearly every day just at present. I went to Thursday's contest, and saw six bulls and fifteen horses slaughtered. I was disgusted and bored, and came away simply worn out, not with excitement, but with a sinking stomach and fluttering heart. My first feeling was that of anger at the men in the ring for brutally sacrificing the poor horse, who, with his bandaged eye on to the side towards the bull, was made to receive broadside the cruel horns of the maddened and worried brute. The result was sickening. The horse was ripped open, and amidst screams of pain he was forced to stand again with his entrails dragging on the sand of the arena. Every step he took he trod on

his entrails, but was not allowed to lie down and die until he could no longer bear the burden of the picador, who urged him forward as long as possible with spurs while his servant slashed the dying brute over the head with a stick.

I do not intend to describe the fight; you would probably not publish the revolting details if I did. I merely give one instance which was multiplied over a dozen time with variations more loathing and gory as the insistent crowd's lust for blood grew with what it fed upon. Finally, the bull, his fore part a crimson flood, spirit exhausted, an easy victim for the cowards who were torturing him, was put out of his misery by the matador. For three hours this went on until the six bulls had been dragged out dead by mules.

Bull-fighting is a cruel, soul-debasing sight. Men, women, and children must become brutalised—made callous to suffering and pain. It must and does stamp the character of the people who love it, and degrade them. Many Spaniards will tell you that they do not care for it, and never go. They wish to have the "sport" stopped, but they are few compared to the millions here who would cause civil war rather than their favourite pastime should be abolished. In some parts of the United States the law does not permit a butcher to sit on a jury trying a prisoner for capital crime, because he is supposed to be accustomed to the sight of blood. If such a law were in force here it would be hard to obtain a jury in Madrid, where nearly everyone is a butcher, by proxy at least.

After witnessing a bull-fight it is easy to understand Spanish cruelty in Cuba and elsewhere, and to realise that it was in this Spain that the Inquisition originated. You may see to-day in Madrid the square, Plaza Mayor, where thousands of persons were tortured and burned to death to the great delight of the spectators crowding the balconies about the four sides of the square. It has changed but little in appearance, except that the instruments of torture have been removed a little further away to the Plaza de Toros.

There are many laws in Spain regulating bull-fighting, mostly in favour of the institution. As an example of its

legality, I may merely point out that should all the horses available be killed at a corrida the law allows the managers of the rings to go into the public streets and commandeer the first horses at hand, paying for them, of course. There are more than two hundred and fifty bull-rings in Spain, About five hundred fights are held every year, in which one thousand five hundred bulls and six thousand horses are killed. These are average figures. It is impossible to get any reliable figures of the expense of this national institution, but it must be very large. Matadors of first rank make sometimes from £10,000 to £15,000 a year, and everybody finds money for the bull-fight, though schools suffer in this country, where about fifty per cent. of the people are illiterate.

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Agnosticism:

AN EXPOSITION AND A DEFENCE.

Selected from leading authorities by

CHARLES COCKBILL CATTELL.

Introduction.

Long before I heard of Huxley, or Agnosticism, I held that whatever was presented to the intellect demanding assent, must have reasonable grounds for its acceptance—rational proof. In forming a judgment on any subject, faith or authority must never be permitted to usurp the place of facts. We find ourselves living among incessant changes called "causes and effects," interminable in time and space. These changes have been observed to occur in a certain order; and such are named "Laws of Nature." Hence we are led to believe in universal causation—a first or a last cause having no meaning.

As to why there is one existence we call "Nature," or why there is any existence at all—Who can tell? The idea of one existence includes all that is and all that is necessary for all that happens.

Science in some measure explains how things now existing became what they are; the conditions of existence appear to determine the duration of their varying qualities and forms. These conditions must have been adequate to produce these effects, or the earth in our time would not supply the varied forms and manifestations of life. But why all this has taken

place—Who can tell? Spencer teaches that the power manifested in nature is inscrutable. Those who do not accept the idea of a power indescribable operating in nature, resort to the alternative of an external power. This much we know—that all the changes observable take place *in* the nature we know; hence, a power assumed external to it explains no more than a power assumed to operate within it. As to the durability of Nature, the indestructibility of matter points to unlimited time, an everlasting existence.

Our only scope of inquiry is, therefore, clearly Nature and its laws; the latter term being a name for observed changes, and not in any sense implying causes, such use of the term being misleading, although very common. Law is not a cause, an agent, or an instrument, but merely the name of the path or way along which forces travel to phenomena.

The subject may be made clear by recalling the fact that while the Theist may affirm a God infinite and eternal, and the Atheist may affirm the same of Nature, Agnostics maintain that these terms do not admit of being thought of at all. At most, they convey the idea of *indefinite* extent in space and time, while every thought implies a boundary, a limit, something definite.

Some perverse people insist that "Agnostic" stands for Ignorance, and others contend it is adopted through want of courage to avow what we really are. I hold the name is a fitting title to distinguish one who finds it beyond his mental powers to believe in things that have no relation to common knowledge.

In formulating a thought about anything, we discover it implies likeness, relation, and difference, which cannot apply to the terms "infinite" or "eternal"—no such thought is possible; they have no likeness, relation or difference, although no words are more commonly heard in the religious world. The Agnostic's position is governed by limits found to rule our intellect in forming conclusions. An examination of the formulation of consciousness about the infinite will reveal the fact that parts of known things have been used in its formation.

A popular writer maintains that he can grasp all the ideas which the Agnostic deems beyond our powers to grasp, such as self-existence, eternity, infinity, "although it is only by consciousness, by feeling that we know."

But no explanation is given as to how finite consciousness (and there is none other) can feel infinite self-existence.

Although in former years I wrote at length on this subject, I leave the following extracts to represent my views on the present occasion.

The term Agnostic and Agnosticism arose as follows:—

> "I took thought and invented what I conceived to be the appropriate title of Agnostic. It came into my head as suggestively antithetic to the 'Gnostic' of Church history, who professed to know so much about the very things of which I was ignorant. To my satisfaction the term took; and when the *Spectator* had stood godfather to it, any suspicion in the minds of respectable people that knowledge of its parentage might have awakened was, of course, completely lulled. That's the history of the terms.
>
> "And it will be observed that it does not quite agree with the confident assertion of the Rev. Principal of King's College, that 'the adoption of the term Agnostic is only an attempt to shift the issue, and that it involves a mere evasion; in relation to the Church and Christianity. . . . . The people who call themselves 'Agnostics' have been charged with doing so because they have not the courage to declare themselves 'Infidels,' have adopted a new name to escape the unpleasantness which attaches to their proper denomination. . . . Agnosticism is not properly described as a 'negative' creed, nor, indeed, as a creed of any kind, except in so far as a principle which is as much ethical as intellectual. The principle may be stated in various ways, but they all amount to this: that it is wrong for a man to say that he is certain of the objective truth of

any proposition unless he can produce evidence which logically justifies that certainty. That is what Agnosticism asserts, and, in my opinion, it is all that is essential to Agnosticism. That which Agnostics deny and repudiate as immoral, is the contrary doctrine, that there are propositions which men ought to believe, without logically satisfactory evidence; and that reprobation ought to attach to the profession of disbelief in such inadequately supported propositions. The justification of the Agnostic principle lies in the success which follows its application, whether in the field of natural or in that of civil history; and in the fact that, so far as these topics are concerned, no sane man thinks of denying its validity. Agnosticism is the essence of science, whether ancient or modern. It simply means that a man shall not say he knows or believes that which he has no scientific grounds for professing to know or believe. Agnosticism says that we know nothing beyond phenomena. . . . . As to the interests of morality, I am disposed to think that if mankind could be got to act up to this principle in every relation of life, a reformation would be effected such as the world has not yet seen; an approximation to the millenium, such as no supernaturalistic eligion has ever yet succeeded, nor seems likely ever to succeed in effecting."—*Huxley.*

"That which persists unchanging in quantity, but ever changing in form, under the sensible appearances which the universe presents to us, transcends human knowledge and conception, is an unknown and unknowable power, which we are obliged to recognise as without limit in space, and without beginning or end in time. This is in its highest form, the philosophy of Agnosticism. . . . If we ask how came the atoms into existence, endowed with marvellous energy, we can only reply in the words of the poet: 'Behind the veil, behind the veil.' We can only form metaphysical conceptions, or I ought rather

to call them the vaguest guesses. One is, that they were created and endowed with their elementary properties by an all-wise and all-powerful creator. This is Theism. Another, that thought is the only reality, and that all the phenomena of the universe are thoughts and ideas of one universal all-pervading mind. This is Pantheism."

"Or, again, we may frankly acknowledge that the real essence and origin of things are 'behind the veil,' and not knowable or even conceivable by any faculties with which the human mind is endowed in its present state of existence. This is Agnosticism. Agnostics do not deny that, in the course of evolution, certain feelings and aspirations have grown up which find a poetical expression in the ideas of God and immortality. They simply deny that we have, or can have, any certain, definite and scientific knowledge respecting these mysteries."—*Laing.*

"The Agnostic is one who asserts—what nobody denies—that there are limits to the sphere of intelligence. He asserts, further, what many theologians have expressly maintained, that these limits are such as to exclude at least what Lewes called 'metempirical' knowledge. But he goes further, and asserts, in opposition to theologians, that theology lies within the forbidden sphere."

"'Trust your reason,' we have been told until we are tired of the phrase, 'and you will become Atheists or Agnostics.' What right have you to turn round and rate us for being a degree more logical than yourelves? You say, as we say, that the natural man can know nothing of the Divine nature. That is Agnosticism. Our fundamental principal is not only granted but asserted. . . . Dr. Newman's arguments (in 'Grammar of Assent') go to prove that man, as guided by reason, ought to be an Agnostic, and that at the present moment, Agnosticism is the only reasonable faith for, at least, three-quarters of the race. . . . The race collectively is Agnostic,

whatever may be the case with individuals. . . . There is not a single proof of natural theology of which the negative has not been maintained as vigorously as the affirmative. You tell us to be ashamed of professing ignorance. Where is the shame of ignorance in matters still involved in endless and hopeless controversy? Is it not rather a duty."—*Sir Leslie Stephen.*

"The Agnostic neither believes nor disbelieves in a Superior Existence, from lack of satisfying evidence to warrant affirmation or denial. He is neutral, not because he wishes not to believe, or desires to deny, but because language should be measured by proof of conviction. Huxley's wise, useful, and honest word 'Agnostic' has done more to teach theologians to think, and incite in them discrimination and tolerance, than any other word which has been added to the nomenclature of controversy this century."

"Is it 'dodging' to refuse to identify yourself with the preposterous presumption of the Theist or the Atheist? Is it not imposture in any one to adopt a term which implies all-penetrating knowledge, when you know you have it not? Nature is too illimitable to be conceived, and the past is beyond all human experience. The Agnostic neither decries nor disparages them [Theist and Athiest], but frankly says he is not of their way of thinking. Many now see no distinction between Agnosticism and Atheism. It is the wide distinction between knowing and not knowing. Agnosticism means scruplousness and truth."—*G. J. Holyoake.*

"The contest between Theology and Agnosticism is like that between a man in a balloon and one on the solid ground. The balloon man shouts down to his enemy, 'Come up here and I will give you a good beating.' The reply is 'No; I cannot leave the solid ground of fact. I cannot float myself with the gas of sentiment and imagination. But, if you come down to *terra firma*, I will very soon test the strength of your

balloon. If your silk can stand the sharp edge of my knife—scientific criticism—well and good, you will continue to float above the earth. But if not, and a rent is made, you and your balloon will collapse into nothingness. The balloon man shouts down that his antagonist is a coward, throws some dust into the eyes of the spectators, and so ascends into the heavens. The theologian, so long as he remains in the region of emotion and imagination, is safe from any attack on the part of the scientist; but the moment he touches the ground of fact he must prepare for hostilities; and it is well that he should understand that such things as miracles, the inspiration of the Bible, etc., are subject to criticism, and will be vigorously combatted."—*John Wilson, M.A.*

"If after devoting our best energies and highest endeavours to the investigation of the arguments of Maratheism, Dualism, Polytheism, Pantheism, and Atheism, we find none entirely convincing, there is no cowardice involved in the admission. On the contrary, it becomes our highest duty to confess that all our labour has been without fruit or reward. Though we have fervently sought we have failed to find. We are sceptics or agnostics, and recognise the fact that, even should one or other of these five interpretations of the mystery of existence be accepted as its true solution it is but a proximate solution and thus but removes the essential mystery but a step further back."—*Constance E. Plumptre.*

"We get rid of the accursed spirit of condemnation, and the setting open wide—as wide as humanity itself—the gates that lead to truth and human progress. For the Agnostic is no narrow pale, on one side of which stand the saved and the other the lost; and no ascription of certain social experiments to a corrupt imagina- and an evil heart.. . . . . .

"We know nothing of the hereafter—absolutely nothing. But, freed as we are from the trammels of superstition and the strangulation of fear, we

deny the eternal Hell, and the omnipotent Devil formulated by old-world ignorance and terror. For us the life of man is emphatically his life in the present, and his merits or demerits are determined by his relations to others. He has, in a word, got rid of night and its dreams, and has come out into the light of waking day of which he does not pre sume to foretell the state of the evening, or the conditions of the night that follows after. All he knows is that there must come this evening, when strength will wane and the light will wax dim ; and that then will steal down the night—into which he cannot peer. Whether that night is to be starless, or brilliant with these "many mansions" of light, must be left to time to settle. No, the Agnostic does not waste his time in these speculative futilities. He works for the present and in the present, and he leaves the undiscovered future to take care of itself.—*Mrs. Lynn Linton.*

"The essential principles of Agnosticism were known and recognised before the name was invented ; but the introduction of a definite name arrested the attention of the reflecting classes. . . Their attention once fixed on the subject, people began to say this was what they always thought. The unseen and unknown presents an ample field for speculation, and by contemplative minds must always be viewed with reverence and awe. A consciousness that the sphere of known and knowable phenomena, when expanded to its utmost limits, is very far from embracing the whole universe, very far from exhausting the possibilities of thought and feeling, while the Beyond is, to the upright man and pure in heart, an unfathomable abyss into which he looks with much ground for hope and very little for fear.—*Dr. Bithell.*

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